



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

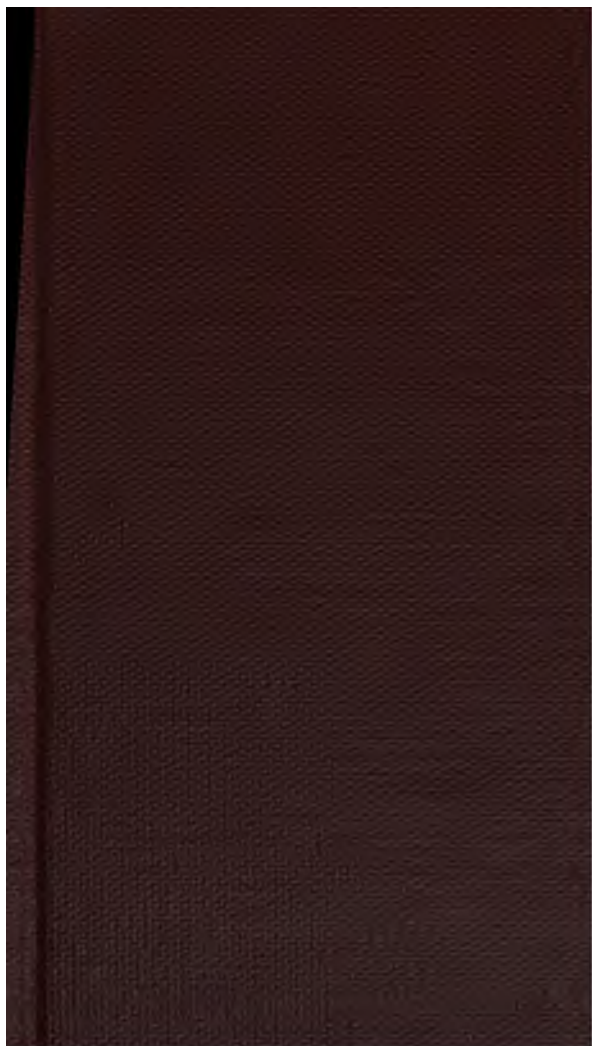
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

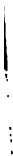


HARVARD DIVINITY SCHOOL
ANDOVER-HARVARD THEOLOGICAL
LIBRARY



From the collection
of the
UNIVERSALIST HISTORICAL
SOCIETY





IS IT A SMALL THING?

OR,

INDIVIDUAL REFORM.

BY MRS. N. T. MUNROE.

BOSTON:
ABEL TOMPKINS,
38 Cornhill.
1849.

BV
4515
.m8

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1846, by
ABEL TOMPKINS,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of Massachusetts.

Stereotyped by
GEORGE A. CURTIS;
NEW ENGLAND TYPE AND STEREOTYPE FOUNDRY.

1116
102

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER.	PAGE.
I.—The Quarrel,	11
II.—Sad Effects of Vice,	19
III.—An Unexpected Visitor,	27
IV.—A Child's Home,	36
V.—Poverty and Crime,	41
VI.—Visit to the City,	54
VII.—The Return,	62
VIII.—An Adopted Daughter,	71
IX.—The Noble Resolve,	77
X.—The Promise and the Temptation,	85
XI.—Society Gossip. A Sad Interview,	93
XII.—Sorrow and Grief,	103
XIII.—Scene in a Gambling-House,	109
XIV.—The Minister's Study,	116
XV.—Parlor Scenes,	123
XVI.—Confidence not Lost,	128
XVII.—Conversation on Reform,	134
XVIII.—Conclusion,	141

"Great is the strength of an individual soul, true to its high trust; — mighty is it, even to the redemption of a world.

"But blessed are they that endure to the end, — singing patiently and sweetly, till all join in, with loved acquiescence, and universal harmony prevails, without forcing into submission the free discord of a single voice.

"This is the hardest and the bravest task which a true soul has to perform amid the clashing elements of time. But *once* has it been done perfectly, unto the end ; and that Voice, — so clear in its meekness, — is heard above all the din of a tumultuous world ; one after another chimes in with its patient sweetness, and through infinite discords, the listening soul can perceive that the great tune is slowly coming into harmony." — *Mrs. Child.*

INDIVIDUAL REFORM.

MEN say this is an age of reform, and that it is manifested in a thousand ways.

The advocates of Temperance point to their silken banner, borne before their grand processions ; to their pledge of perpetual hate to all that can intoxicate, with its long string of names ; and they tell of the thousands that they have reformed.

And Christianity steps forth, with open Bible, and shows us her numerous churches, filled with attentive listeners to truth and eloquence, and she tells us that the world is reforming beneath her influence. She hath sent the Bible to distant lands ; and nations that had long lived in ignorance and superstition, now bow in worship to the one living and true God.

The Abolitionists tell us that slavery will cease, that great and powerful minds are on their side, and that the slave-holding institutions of the south already totter to their centre. A great reform is taking place, and they are its movers.

And the old law of capital punishment feels the influence of the all-powerful spell. The gal-

lows trembles to its foundation, and a thousand voices are raised for its abolishment; and this is Reform. And last, but not least, in the catalogue, stand our new method of prison discipline, our scientific societies, our benevolent institutions, and our asylums for the poor and the distressed.

Surely this is an age of reform. But amid all this talk and labor, does the world grow better? Is humanity in a better condition? Does virtue triumph over vice, and sin hide its head in shame and disgrace? Alas! the truth is too plain for us to shut our eyes against it.

We are not conservatives; we do not say, "Give us the days of the past, for the present are full of wickedness and sin." But we do say that it is well that the watchword of the day is reform; for much, very much is it needed.

Though Temperance and Christianity and other agents have done much, yet sin still stalks boldly through the world, and thousands are following in its path; suffering humanity still cries aloud for aid, and crime still rears its hydra head in defiance and scorn. The work is grandly laid out, but it is but begun. The scheme is beautiful, the theory perfection, and now we want the practice.

In some things men are strangely disinterested. The world needs reform, and they willingly get

up any new method they think will succeed, and they form societies ; and this, so far as it goes, is well enough. But, after all the noise and talk, **there** is a reform which is more powerful than either, and which mankind are prone, especially in this age of great things, to neglect.

This is individual reform. We wish to reform hundreds at once, to convert whole cities, to do some great work. It is too small, this work of individual reform, and so, in our anxiety for the world at large, for the thousands who are in need of a kind hand to help them, we overlook the very foundation of the work, that on which our great superstructure must rest ; and it is not to be wondered at that so often it falls, crushed and broken, to the ground. O, we do not enough estimate the value of this individual reform, this ground-work of all others ! The light of a good life shines far. A man who has conquered himself can do more for his fellow-men than hundreds who are still in need of that very reform they are so anxious their fellow-men should feel.

The Washingtonians understood this, when they came up from their midnight revelries, and haunts of drunkenness, and stood strong in their purpose, first to reform themselves, and then go forth and take their erring brother by the hand, and lead him back to virtue. They did not go

reeling up to him, and with the breath of poison on their own lips, say, "Reform, reform, the great work is begun."

In the same way has Christianity, and every other good, prospered. Luther threw off the shackles of superstition from his own soul, ere he went forth to his mighty work. More than we need theories and institutions, do we need the examples of good and holy lives. The Bible, we know, is full of good precepts and glorious wisdom. But O, above all, shines that holy life of Christ! That life has made more converts to Christianity than aught else beside. In that life are embodied all those glorious precepts, and that divine wisdom, and there it is ever before us, with its gentle, holy light.

And so does a good life ever shine; and such examples are around us, and they stand like beacon lights upon the shores of life.

And as Christianity sprung from that life of Christ, so do all great reforms spring from this principle of individual reform.

But, to illustrate this idea of reform, I have a simple tale to tell.

CHAPTER I.

THE QUARREL.

Just in the outskirts of a large and populous town, stood the humble dwelling inhabited by Mrs. Gordon.

The house was very small, consisting only of two rooms, a bed-room and an attic. But it was pleasantly situated, and Mrs. Gordon had bought it with the labor of her own hands, and it was dear to her. There was a little piece of ground in front, and this was well cultivated, and at this season of the year, for it was the last of spring, it boasted of a few early flowers.

It was now near the close of the day, and Mrs. Gordon had laid aside her work, and sat at the open window listening to the innocent prattle of her little girl, a child of about four years of age. She had been playing round all day, and was tired and weary; and the mother had put on her night-clothes, and smoothed back the curls, and put them away from the little round face, underneath her cap, and she now lay in her mother's

arms, with her bright face resting on her bosom, listening to the voice which had ever been kind and gentle to her.

"Sing to me, mamma," said the little girl, for her eyes were fast closing in sleep. The mother kissed the fair brow raised to hers, and sung a gentle lullaby. But just as she had concluded, and carried the child to her bed, the door opened very quickly, and a boy of about eleven years of age entered. He was much excited; he flung down his cap, and wiped the perspiration from his forehead, and, "Mother," said he, in a quick, passionate tone, "I wont play with George Bryant any more; he is a proud, saucy, ugly boy, and I hate him."

"Stop, stop, my son," said the mother; "you don't know what you are saying."

"Yes I do, mother; I said that George Bryant was a proud, saucy, ugly boy, and that I hated him."

"But I heard you say, the other day, that he was very kind and generous."

"Well, so he is when he is a mind to be, and if everybody will do just as he says. But I'll just let him know that I sha'n't do as he tells me; I a'n't obliged to mind him, I know."

"What has George Bryant done now, Henry, that should make you so angry?"

"Done," said the boy, — and his dark eyes flashed, and he clenched his fist with rage, — "why, he threw his ball over the fence, when he was at play, and then ordered me to go and get it; and because I would n't mind him, he called me names; he said I was the son of a cheat, and a drunkard; and, mother, I was so mad, that I struck him, and I guess he'll not call me names again."

Mrs. Gordon leaned her head upon her hands, and the tears fell down her cheeks. Henry saw this, but he was very angry, and although he could have wept himself, yet his spirit would not yield.

Mrs. Gordon raised her face, but she was very pale, and her voice trembled. "And so you struck your playmate, struck the boy who saved your little sister's life?"

"Yes, I did, mother, and I knew you would say it was wrong, but I could n't help it."

"Henry," said she, in a sad voice, "when will you learn to govern your temper?"

"Never, mother, as long as he calls me such names. I'll strike him again, if he does it."

"But were you not nearer the fence than George, and could you not have thrown him his ball very easily?"

"Yes, I was, but I didn't want to, and I told him he was a great lazy fellow to ask me."

"I thought it was so, my son. Do you not see that you was the first transgressor? Had you handed him his ball kindly, there would have been no trouble. Do you not remember the Bible says, 'Be ye kind one to another?'"

At this moment the door opened, and a boy of about Henry's size entered. He crossed the room to where Mrs. Gordon was sitting, and, raising his cap from his head, said in a low voice, "Mrs. Gordon, my mother has sent me to you to ask your forgiveness for the unkind words I used towards Henry this afternoon. I am very sorry if I have hurt his or your feelings."

It was evidently by a great effort that the boy had proceeded thus far, but here he stopped.

Mrs. Gordon took his hand in hers, and, pressing it kindly, said, "George, you are freely forgiven, and I must thank you for thus owning your fault, and setting so good an example to Henry. Doubtless you were

both to blame, but you will shake hands and be friends again."

George extended his hand, but Henry was not yet overcome. "Shall we not be friends again?" said George, still extending his hand. Henry raised his eyes; one glance was enough; he held out his hand, and each was firmly grasped by the other.

There was a glad laugh, a light footfall, and little Amy Gordon came gliding into the room like a spirit. "Henry did n't kiss little Amy before she went to bed," said she, coming up to her brother, and putting her lips to his.

"And I did n't kiss little Amy either," said George, catching her in his arms, and almost smothering her with kisses. She struggled in his embrace for a moment, but was evidently very well pleased with her situation; for she sat very still, running her tiny fingers through his hair, and laughing to think she had stolen so slyly from her bed. "Mamma thought her little girl was asleep, but I heard George come, and got up to see him, because George pulled little Amy out of the water. Did n't he, mamma?"

"Yes, my child," said the mother, "but you had better run back to bed."

"Oh no, I want to sit up a little while longer," said she, nestling still closer to George.

"But I am going home now, Amy," said he, "so you had better go back again, only give me one kiss before you go." She did as requested, and sliding down from his arms, ran laughing back to her bed.

George bade Mrs. Gordon and Henry good night, and departed. There was silence in the room for some time after he had gone. Mrs. Gordon arose, and, lighting a lamp, sat down to her work, but Henry sat in deep thought. Two or three times he raised his head as if wishing to ask some question, but his courage failed. He took a book, but it did not interest him, and, at last, shutting it as if with a desperate resolution, he said, "Mother, why did George Bryant call me the son of a cheat, and a drunkard?"

Mrs. Gordon started; her thoughts had been far away, and the question came upon her unexpectedly. She hesitated, and turned pale. "I will perhaps tell you some other time."

"No, mother, I want to know now."

"But you have forgiven him, my son, have you not?"

"Yes, but I don't know why he should call me so. Tell me, mother, about my father?"

Mrs. Gordon struggled hard with her feelings; but looking at her son, and seeing his anxiety, and thinking it would be of no use to try to conceal from him any longer, that of which he must soon hear, she conquered her emotion, and proceeded to tell him. It was a sad tale that she poured into the ears of that young child. A tale of passions ungoverned, of temptations yielded to, of years of sorrow, ending in crime and desertion, and followed by after years of loneliness and toil, cheered only by the smiles of her children, and the hope that they would be virtuous and good, and the comfort of her declining years. All this she told him. And it was a hard task for the mother to tell the child of the errors of his father, and had she not hoped it would prove to him a useful lesson, she could not have nerved herself to the task. But the child had some of the faults of the father, and they were to her a constant source of anxiety and care. Tears coursed down the cheek of Mrs. Gordon, as she ended, and the dark, flashing eye of the boy had grown soft. There were many feelings at work in

his heart, and among the rest was a sense of shame and disgrace. He covered his face with his hands, and the tears fell through his fingers.

He had faint remembrances of his father, but never until now had he learned the sad history, although he had often asked concerning him. Young as he was, he comprehended something of his mother's trials and sorrows, and in his heart he determined that he would indeed be to her a comfort and a stay. "But will father never come back?" said he.

"I cannot say, my son, whether he is still living."

The mother and child continued their conversation much longer, and then, after George had read a chapter in the Bible, they separated for the night; he to lay his head upon his pillow, and dream of his father, and she to pray that the Lord would keep her child from temptation, and give him all needed strength.

CHAPTER II.

SAD EFFECTS OF VICE.

ALBERT GORDON was the only son of indulgent parents. He was a wild, reckless, passionate boy. He had his good traits, but they were sadly darkened. His parents took little Emma Wilson, an orphan, and adopted her as their child. Kind and gentle was she ever, a blessing to the hearts that cherished her; and when she grew up to womanhood, they gladly gave her to their son to be his wife, hoping that her gentle disposition would have a good influence over him. His wife feared, even while she loved him, and though he was generally kind to her, for there was none on earth he loved so well, yet she stood in terror of his passionate temper.

A few years passed very well, but at length the trouble came. In the first place, his temper was roused by what he considered a public affront from some of his fellow-townsmen. He yielded to his angry feelings, and his conduct brought upon him

the indignation of many. This only exasperated him the more; and after a time, finding that he was universally disliked, and looked upon as a man with whom it was dangerous to have any dealings, he determined to leave the town. Accordingly, he moved with his wife, his parents, and his children, to a place at some distance.

But here he had no employment, and ere he could find any, he fell into bad company, and being out of humor with himself, and the whole world, he fell an easy prey to temptation. By little and little his property was squandered away, and though in his better moments, he would say he would reform, yet again would temptation come, and again he would yield.

His parents died. Their grey hairs went down in sorrow to the grave; two little children slumbered beside them; and as he looked upon the dead, good resolutions again sprung up in his heart. He thought of his wife, and of his only child, and he would reform.

Poverty stared him in the face; he went out to seek for employment, but he found none; he turned with sad steps to his home; he met a companion who lured him to the

gambling house. They drank, they played deeply, and Gordon won. His companion accused him of unfair play; Gordon, already excited by drink, told him that he lied. The charge was repeated. Gordon sprung from his seat, and with one blow felled him to the floor. He saw with horror the deed he had done, and, thinking he had murdered the man, he fled. He went first to his home,—the home he had left with strong resolutions to do right. There sat his wife waiting for him. She looked up on his entrance, but the eye that was lighted with hope, dropped in despair. She saw that he was intoxicated, and terribly excited.

"Emma," said he quickly, "do up a bundle of clothes; I am going off; be quick, for the love of Heaven."

"Where are you going, Albert?"

"Going where I cannot be found; I have killed a man, and if I stay here I shall be hung."

"Merciful God!" said the wretched woman, clasping her hands in agony.

"Be quick," said he, "if you do not wish to see my lifeless body hanging on the gallows."

"But perhaps you have not killed him,"

said the heart-stricken woman, as, with trembling hands, she tied up a small bundle of her husband's apparel.

"But I have killed him. Didn't I see his blood streaming on the floor? Fool that he was, to call me a cheat. Richard Vernon might have known my temper better."

"But let me go with you, Albert," said she. "I will not detain you long, I will be ready in a very few moments."

"No, no! it will be impossible," said he, hastily.

She knelt before him; she entreated him to let her go with him, or even to tell her where he was going. "I do not know myself," was his only reply. "But you will write to me, and let me know?" said she.

"I will think of it," said he, snatching up his bundle and starting for the door. He looked round once, and saw the pale face of his wife, and his heart relented. He returned, clasped her to his heart, kissed her tenderly, turned to the bed, and kissed his sleeping child, and then, throwing down a purse of his ill-gotten gains, departed.

And, from that hour, Mrs. Gordon had never heard from him. But she had the

satisfaction of knowing that he was not a murderer. The man was stunned, not killed, by the blow. She offered him the purse her husband had left her, thinking it rightfully belonged to him. But he refused to take it; for, amid much that was bad in his character, there still lurked something noble. "He should not take it from a woman," he said; "besides, she would have need enough for it all." "But pray take it," said she; "the Lord will provide for me and mine." "No, I shall not take it," said he, firmly, and pressing it back in her hand; "it is but a little, and you are entirely welcome; besides, I feel as if I owed you some recompense."

Mrs. Gordon departed reluctantly with the money in her hand. To be sure it was but little, yet it was enough to carry her back to her native place. Here she had many friends, for all who knew her loved her. She rented this small house of Mr. Bryant, and toiled to support herself and children. After four years of hard labor, she was enabled to purchase this small cottage. True, Mr. Bryant sold it to her very low; he would willingly have allowed her to live in it free of all charge; but she wished to

purchase, because then she should not feel dependent; therefore, he sold it to her.

Close beside this humble cottage, stood the stately mansion of Mr. Bryant. The grounds were laid out with elegance and taste, and everything in and about the house betokened the wealth of the owner. He was a kind-hearted, generous man, and she a gentle and affectionate woman, a kind mother, a dutiful wife, and a constant friend. She and Mrs. Gordon had been friends in early life, and they still loved each other fervently, though their fortunes in life were so different.

Mr. Bryant had but one child, the one of whom we have spoken. George and Henry were generally very good friends but Henry was passionate and easily roused, and George, as boys sometimes will, loved to provoke him, just, as he said, to see him storm. But George loved Henry notwithstanding this, and was always ready to own his fault; but Henry was not always as ready to forgive, and sometimes they were estranged for weeks together.

Mrs. Gordon and Henry both had reason to be grateful to George, for he had once saved the life of little Amy.

The child had run away down to the water, a short distance from the house, and seating herself upon the bank, pulled off her shoes and stockings, and was splashing the water with her tiny feet, and laughing in her childish glee. George heard her laugh, but it was some time ere he found the little truant, for she was hidden by the bushes. But at length he caught a glimpse of her dress through the green leaves, but ere he got near enough to distinguish her figure, he heard a shriek. Quicker than thought he was there. She had slipped from her seat, and George could just see her head above the water, which was very deep.

He was something of a swimmer, and he instantly plunged after her. It was the work of a moment, and then he was standing on the bank, with Amy in his arms. In another moment he was at the cottage of her mother. The child was totally unconscious; her bright hair hung in a wet mass round her pale, colorless face. Her merry eyes were shut, and there was no breath upon her parted lips. "She is not dead, she cannot be dead, George," said the agitated mother, as she took the child from his arms. "Oh, no!" said he, "she was n't in

the water a minute ; I pulled her out just as quick as I could ; indeed I did. Oh, no ! she is n't dead," and the tears fell down his already wet cheek.

Mrs. Gordon used every means to restore her, and soon succeeded. She undressed her and put on dry clothes, and soon she was bright as ever. "But George is all wet too, mamma," said little Amy ; "give him some dry clothes. Did George fall into the water too ?" "Sure enough, George, you are all wet ; I had forgotten you entirely, I was so selfish." "Oh, never mind," said the boy, "I shall run home in a minute."

"But not in those wet clothes. Go in the bedroom ; you will find some of Henry's hanging in the closet ; they may be rather small, but I think they will do, for you must not keep those wet ones on any longer." George complied, and soon came out in Henry's apparel. At this moment, Henry himself entered, and little Amy clapped her hands and laughed. "I have got two brother Henrys, haven't I, mamma." The brother was soon made acquainted with the accident, and it is due to him to say, that they did not quarrel from that time, till the incident occurred which I have mentioned in the preceding chapter.

CHAPTER III.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR.

ONE afternoon, a few days after the quarrel between the two boys, Mrs. Gordon put on her bonnet and shawl, and taking a bundle of work, which she had just finished, in her hand, prepared for a walk to town.

It was some distance to the store of Mr. Gardner, her place of destination. He was the proprietor of a clothing establishment, and supplied a number of poor women with what is styled "slop work."

Mrs. Gordon entered, and laying her bundle on the counter, asked the boy if Mr. Gardner was in. The boy went into the adjoining room to call him, and he soon made his appearance.

"I have brought the work you gave me to do," said Mrs. Gordon, "and if you have any more, I should be extremely thankful for it."

Mr. Gardner was a man of business; he untied the bundle, took out the work and examined it carefully piece by piece, but could find no fault at all.

"I hope it is done to suit you?" said

"Oh, very well, very well, and you say want some more? Well, well, I'll see," he, turning round and looking about the
"I'll see; could n't you call again to row?"

"It would be inconvenient, as I live ways from here; indeed, I would rather it to-day, if it were possible, but I can to-morrow, if you have n't it ready."

"Well, I'll see; I'll be back in one ment," said he, going into the inner . He soon returned with a very small b in his hand.

"Here are two pairs of overalls," said handing her the bundle.

"Is this all you can let me have to-d

"Nothing more cut out; we had a c a large quantity of work from two soc in town, and as they do it full as che anybody, why, you see it would be very ish not to let them have it; so this is a have this afternoon. But here is the n for your last work," said he, throwi down upon the counter, and disappeari the other room. Mrs. Gordon put the n in her purse, and, taking up the b departed.

It was nearly dark when Mrs. Gordon reached home, and she hastened to prepare the frugal supper—and to any one who looked in upon that humble family, they would have seemed very happy. Henry had that day gained a great victory over his temper, and had been rewarded by his mother's approval, and he sat there the perfect picture of happiness. And little Amy, surely she was happy, and her sweet voice and ringing laugh made music in that lowly home. And though Mrs. Gordon's countenance bore the marks of anxiety and care, yet she smiled to see the happiness of her children, and conversed cheerfully with them, until it was time for them to retire. She sat alone, busy with her work until a late hour, and was just preparing to lay it by, when she heard a step under the window. She listened, and presently there was a light rap on the door. She took the light in her hand, and opened the door, and a man stood before her.

Surely his countenance was familiar ; but the light was but partially thrown on his face, and he looked so pale and thin that she hesitated.

"Don't you know me, Emma?" said the man, in a low voice, and advancing nearer

towards the light. The lamp almost fell from the trembling hand which held it, and she took hold of the door for support.

"Is it indeed you, my husband?" said she, in a faltering voice, and raising her eyes to his face; "but you look very pale and thin; come in, do;" and she took him by the hand, and led him into the house, closing the door after her.

"And have you indeed come home again, Albert? but how pale you are; let me get you some refreshment?"

"I have travelled some distance since dark," said he, "and am very tired, and should, indeed, thank you for a little something to eat."

She quickly prepared him some refreshment, and he ate quite heartily. She sat and watched him during the repast. He was much thinner than when he went away, and gray hairs were now mixed with the black on his temples. His features had grown sharp, and altogether he looked as if eight, instead of four years, had passed since they parted.

He was dressed decently well, and she was thankful to perceive it, for it showed that he had not suffered for the necessities of life.

"And how have you got along, Emma?" said he, as he pushed back his chair from the table, and looked kindly, yes, very kindly, into her face. "I am afraid you have worked hard; you look paler than you used to do; time has touched you as well as myself."

"I do not complain; my heavenly Father has given me many blessings. I have friends who have been very kind to me; so I have not suffered, although I have been obliged to work very hard; that, however, is of no consequence. But now you have come back, you will not leave me again?"

"It will be impossible for me to stay at present. I have travelled some distance to-night on purpose to see you, and I must return before morning."

"But why, Albert, why need you be so secret. You can find employment in town. Mr. Bryant has been a good friend to me, and I doubt not he would endeavor to procure you some situation."

"No, no, Emma; don't try to urge me. I cannot come back here to live, and be the wonder of a gaping multitude. And you know," he added, in a tone of bitterness, "that the people here never liked me over well."

"Well, if you will not stay here, at least let your wife and children go with you; I can work and maintain them, even as I have done."

"You know not what you ask. I have no home myself. No, Emma, stay where you are for the present; here you seem to be comfortably provided for. But I am poor, and have scarcely a place to lay my head."

"And yet you refuse to stay with your wife and children, when you are offered a comfortable home; for, Albert, this house is mine; it is small, to be sure, but there is room enough for us all."

"Is it all yours, did you say, Emma? and how came you by it?" said he, with surprise.

"I bought it with the labor of my own hands, and the kindness of my friends; and Mr. Bryant let me have the house very cheap. Then say that you will stay with us," said she, looking earnestly into his face. "Here you will be safe from temptation; there will be no bad influences around you. You will comply with my request, will you not?"

Mr. Gordon averted his face, as he heard the last words, and a flush, almost of anger, passed over his brow. She feared that she had gone too far, and laying her hand on his arm, said, "Come, and see our children,"

at the same time leading the way up stairs. He followed her, although with seeming reluctance, and she led him to Henry's bed; and "has he not grown, Albert? and he is a good boy, only he is very passionate." Mr. Gordon looked upon his son, and replied, "Yes; four years have altered him very much; but I fear that we shall wake him; we had better retire."

"Come and see our little Amy," said the mother, going down stairs and opening the door of the bed-room. Mr. Gordon started at the vision of loveliness that met his view. The little creature lay with her face resting on her tiny hand, which was almost hidden by her sunny curls, which had escaped from her cap. The long lashes lay upon her rosy cheek, and her sweet lips smiled as she slept.

"Is she not beautiful?" said the mother, bending over her.

"She is, indeed, very beautiful," said the father, and a tear came to his eye, and he stood looking at her for some time, then turning, left the room, and resumed his seat in silence.

"You will stay with us, will you not, my husband?" said Mrs. Gordon, in a low voice.

"I cannot, Emma ; I must go back, as I told you, before morning."

"But must we ever live thus, Albert? Already your boy asks concerning his father, and what shall I tell him? Oh, my husband, is my life to be ever thus darkened?"

"I cannot help it, Emma ; I am poor, miserably poor ; I have no friends, as you have ; I am in debt even now, and ere to-morrow night, may be in prison."

"In debt ; and for what, Albert?" said she, looking anxiously and inquiringly in his face.

He almost quailed beneath her glance, but nevertheless said, calmly, "For the necessities of life, Emma. I cannot work ; do I, indeed, look as if I were able? I could not starve, while there were any to trust me ; and now there are none."

"How much do you owe, Albert?"

"It is but a paltry sum ; a poor man's credit is not long," said he bitterly.

Mrs. Gordon arose, and, going to a table, opened a drawer, and taking from thence the money she had that day received for her work, handed it to him.

"There is money, Albert ; take it, and pay the debt, and then, surely, you will not refuse my request?"

He took the money from her hand, not

reluctantly, but eagerly, and evading her last question, thanked her with many expressions of kindness.

"I must go now," said he, "as it is getting very late, and I must get to the city before morning."

"If you think you must go, I will not detain you," said she; "and the sooner the debt is paid the better, and then I trust I shall soon see you again."

Mr. Gordon parted from his wife with many expressions of kindness, and as she heard the sound of his departing footsteps, she said to herself, "Surely he will come back; he cannot be deceiving me. He looks pale and thin; indeed, I fear he is not well; if he would only come home, I think he would be better; he would then be away from temptation and evil influences. Strange he is so averse to the proposal. I do not think he is so passionate as he used to be; when I spoke of keeping from temptation, the angry feeling quickly passed away. And he does not look as if he was intemperate; perhaps sorrow has had a good influence over him. Oh! I cannot think but there is happiness yet in store for us."

Oh! when was trusting woman ever hopeless of those she loved?

CHAPTER IV.

A CHILD'S HOME.

MR. GORDON had proceeded about half a mile from the house, in a very unfrequented road, when a light as from a lantern flashed across his path, and a loud whisper was heard. "Well, you have come at last; I began to think you were never coming."

"I came as soon as I could get away, Watson," was the reply.

"I suppose so," said he; "it takes so long to get round these women, they have so many soft speeches to make. Did she make you cry any, Gordon? and was she glad to see you?"

"More so than she would have been if she had guessed the truth. Faith, man, it made me feel worse than I thought it would."

"Well, did you get enough to pay for going?"

"I guess so, but my conscience almost smote me; it seemed cruel to take that which she had worked so hard to obtain, and two children to take care of besides."

"She is a remarkable woman, that wife of yours," said Watson, in a cool, sarcastic tone.

"I'll tell you what, Watson," said Gordon, angrily, "you needn't speak of my wife in that manner; if I treat her badly myself, I won't allow others to speak lightly of her."

"No affront, my dear fellow; I meant well enough."

"Lucky for you if you did."

"But we might as well be going," said Watson, "for the horses are pretty tired of standing." And the men turned their steps to a clump of trees, where two horses stood ready saddled. They were soon mounted and off.

It wanted now about an hour of daylight, and by the time they were able to distinguish objects at any distance, the horsemen were in sight of the city.

"We shall get home in good season," said Watson, as their horses' hoofs struck the bridge.

It was quite still as they rode through the streets, for the bustle of the day had not commenced.

They stopped at a stable and left the

horses, which they had hired for the occasion, and then proceeded to what Watson called his home. It was in a narrow, filthy street, up an alley, in a low, miserable house, and consisted of only two wretched rooms. There was no sound of life in the house when they entered, and they seated themselves, and Gordon took out the purse and counted the money.

"It is not much," said Watson, in a dissatisfied tone. Gordon's eyes flashed. "What more could I do? I have taken the bread out of my children's mouths as it is."

"Oh, it will do very well for the first time," answered he, carelessly.

Gordon flung the purse upon the table and muttered between his closed teeth. Watson did not appear to notice him, but went to the door of the other room, and said, in a loud voice: "Come, Clara, it is time to get up; I want some breakfast."

"I am coming, father," said a low, childish voice; and soon, a girl came into the room, about eight years of age, and began, with the assistance of her father, to prepare the breakfast, which was soon on the table. And while they are eating it, we will de-

scribe the miserable abode. There was no attempt or show of neatness about the house. The floor was almost black with dirt, and the windows were so smoky one could hardly see through them. The furniture was scanty; barely enough for use. The two men were dressed decently well, but the child was both dirty and ragged. And yet she was pretty, or would have been had she been clean, for her features were regular, her eyes soft and blue, and her hair, although hanging uncombed down her face and neck, was very luxuriant, and of a beautiful brown color.

True, her arms were thin, her cheeks were not plump; and her form was very slight; but still, there was something interesting about her, and her voice was very sweet and low.

'T was sad to see that beautiful human flower in such a scene of wickedness and crime! Yet her father, wicked and unprincipled though he was, loved his child, and ever spoke kindly to her. And she was the only being he did love; every other good and holy feeling seemed dead within his heart. He was calm and self-possessed in his villany; cool and deliberate in his wick-

edness, and never yielded to passion or anger.

After breakfast, the two men went and the little girl was left to amuse herself as best she might, during the rest of the day. Alas! what was there to keep her pure amid so much of vice? She was growing up in ignorance, exposed to evil and danger. Strange that there was still so much of good in her that was pure and good! strange that she was not wholly depraved! Alas for the sweet child! As well expect the lily to remain spotless that is trodden under foot as that childhood will preserve its purity when exposed to vice and sin.

CHAPTER V.

POVERTY AND CRIME.

WEEKS passed, and as Mrs. Gordon heard no more from her husband, she began to feel that she was indeed deceived, and the hope of his reformation again died almost entirely away.

She could now procure but little work from Mr. Gardner, and though Mrs. Bryant was very kind to her, it yet took all she could earn to support her family. But she was not discouraged; she was sure of a home; and she could certainly earn enough, she thought, for their daily wants. And Henry would soon be able to be of some assistance to her, though she wished to keep him at school as long as she could; for he was a very good scholar, and loved his books very much.

A few weeks more passed, and again Mrs. Gordon had a visit from her husband. Again he came for money; and again, although she felt it was for no good purpose he wanted it, she could not refuse, and *she gave him all she had at the time.*

There were some people in Glendale, as in other places, who busied themselves much in the affairs of others. Among the most noted of this class, was a Mrs. Warren, with her two daughters, who lived not a great way from Mrs. Gordon's.

"Are you going to the society meeting this afternoon?" said Mrs. Warren, to Mrs. Waitt, a morning caller.

"I think of going," said she; "it is a business meeting, I believe."

"Yes, it is our yearly meeting, and we shall choose our officers. Some talk of having Mrs. Bryant for president, and some, Mrs. Barton. For my part, I shall vote for the latter; Mrs. Bryant is so aristocratic, I cannot bear her."

"How can you say so? I think her very sociable and familiar."

"That's just as the lady fancies," said Mrs. Warren, with a toss of the head, "but she is too proud to call and see me; however, she can visit that Mrs. Gordon, and sit there by the hour together. Julia says she was there the last society day; you know she was not at the meeting."

"Yes; I knew she was there. Mrs. Gordon's little girl was sick, and she herself

quite unwell, and I thought it very kind in Mrs. Bryant to assist them."

"I don't see why people think so much of that Mrs. Gordon; I am sure I don't see anything very attractive about her. She owns the house where she lives, and I don't think people need pity her so much. There is that great boy, too, kept at school, when he is big enough to earn his own living. I would n't work myself to death for him. I would make his father take care of him."

"But where is his father?" said Mrs. Waitt; "there is the trouble."

"Oh, I guess she knows well enough where he is; she has seen him, and not a great while since, either; though they are so sly about it."

"Do you really think so?"

"I know it," said Mrs. Warren, very positively; "but pray don't tell any one that the news came from me. But whoever helps Mrs. Gordon, helps, also, to support her miserable husband. He does not come there so slyly for nothing."

It was soon a current report, that Mr. Gordon had been home a number of times, and his wife had given him money. "How foolish;" said some; "only encouraging him in his bad habits."

Many true friends of Mrs. Gordon, hearing the story, blamed her very much, not knowing the particulars of the case, and believing, as people are apt to do, the first side they hear.

In spite of Mrs. Warren's wishes, Mrs. Bryant was unanimously voted for as president of the Benevolent Society. She begged leave, however, to decline accepting the office, on account of her husband's health.

He was quite unwell, and the physician had advised a journey to the south, and they should probably be gone some time. Mrs. Barton was finally chosen, much to Mrs. Warren's satisfaction.

It was towards the last of autumn, when Mr. Bryant and his family started on their journey. His wife came to Mrs. Gordon, and inquired if she could render her assistance in any way ere she went.

Mrs. Gordon thanked her for her kind offer, but, while she had health, she thought she could procure a living for herself and children.

The hour of parting was a sad one for George and Henry and Amy. The boys strove manfully against the tears that would come, but Amy sobbed without restraint,

and George, at length, partly succeeded in comforting her, by telling her that he should be back soon, and then he would have a great many things to tell her, and many pretty toys to show her. But she was sad for many days after their departure, and when they were spoken of, the tears would start afresh.

The winter came on cold and cheerless to the poor. The rich sat round their comfortable fires; the young and the gay went to their rides and parties, and thought that winter was very pleasant. But alas for the poor! crouching over their small fires. Alas for those exposed to the piercing blasts, with their thin and scanty covering!

It was a sad winter for Mrs. Gordon. She could get but little work, and the money she had given to her husband was considerable from her scanty store; and though not actually in a state of suffering, she was far from having all the necessaries of life.

This state of things would not have been, had the kind-hearted Mr. Bryant been at home.

But people said, "Oh, she is well enough off; she owns a good house; she will not suffer; better assist those more unfortunate

Oh, yes! this is the cry. Assist those more unfortunate, — reform those more wicked, — stop some great evil; but this is a small thing, and will take care of itself; and so there is still suffering, still wickedness and crime.

Poor little Amy! She was obliged to sit crouching over the scanty fire, for she was but thinly clad, and her face often looked blue and cold. Yet she was a great blessing to that lowly home, for Henry was old enough to feel that his mother was very poor, and sometimes he was very sad. But Amy, notwithstanding cold and poverty, was always happy, always had something to say, and they must smile at her bright sayings.

O, there is nothing like the innocent prattle of childhood to win its way to saddened hearts!

But the spirit of Henry was roused. "Mother," said he, one night, as he came in glowing with exercise, "Mr. Waitt says that he will give me half a dollar a week if I will come and work for him."

"But had n't you rather go to school, my son?"

"Well, I had, mother," said he, frankly.

but then we are so poor, and little Amy has no good shoes, and she can't go out for walks at all, and no good warm gowns; and when I go there, I can get half a dollar a week, don't you think! And I can study evenings, you know, for Mr. Waitt says I may come home every night. May n't I go, mother?"

"Yes, my child, you may go if you think you shall like."

Henry was quite elated, and told Amy that before long she should have some new shoes and a new gown. The child raised her large eyes and laughed at the joyous thought; and then, looking down at her feet, which were peeping out of the holes of her shoes, said, merrily: "These are real old shoes, a'n't they Harry? and I should like a new pair very much."

Henry's wages were henceforth a great help to his mother, and he liked his place very much, for Mr. Waitt and his family were very kind to him. He was, in truth, a good boy, and had succeeded in a great measure in conquering his passionate temper; and though sometimes the angry feeling would come up in his heart, yet he would think of the kind advice of his mother, and check the hasty word.

Mrs. Gordon had one more sad interview with her husband, in which he reproached her for what he called her ungenerous heart. He pleaded ill health, and indeed he looked very ill, and was miserably clad, and had she possessed any money, she would willingly have given it to him.

"But," said she, "Albert, we have but very little money in the house, and that belongs not to me, but to our son; you surely will not take away his hard-earned wages?"

"But I do need it so much. Look at me, Emma; do I not look miserably? I shall not need your assistance long; see how my hand trembles;" and he held out his thin and almost palsied hand.

"Stay with us, my husband," said she, "and we will nurse you and take care of you."

"I cannot stay," said he, with some vehemence; "I thought you knew my temper better than to ask me again; I will not be seen by the inhabitants of this town; I have still too much pride left for that. But where is the money, Emma?" said he, in a milder tone.

"You surely will not take it?"

"You have friends who will not see you *suffer*; I have no friends."

"You cast away from you your truest friend. Here is the money, if your heart will let you take your poor boy's hard earnings."

The wretched man took the money from his wife, and departed.

Henry had not gone to sleep when his father came into the house, having sat up quite late with his books; and as the door was open that led up stairs, he had heard all that passed. He slipped on his clothes, after his father had gone, and came down stairs. His mother sat by the table, weeping bitterly. He approached, and putting his arm around her neck, kissed her; she did not speak, but put her hand kindly on his head, and the tears of the mother and child fell together.

"Has my father ever been here before?" said Henry, at length.

"Yes; twice."

"And did he come for money both times?"

"Yes, my son, and I gave it to him, wronging my children at the same time."

"Dear mother, don't cry so," said Henry, kindly. "Don't fear; we shall get along very well; I can support you and sister Amy; you mustn't work so hard as you have done."

"You are a good boy, my son. The Lord has surely given me many blessings. Let us pray that your father may yet see the error of his ways, and return to the bosom of his family."

Shall we follow Mr. Gordon to his miserable abode. It was a long, cold way to the city, but he had no money to hire a horse, and was therefore obliged to walk. It was morning when he arrived, and Watson and his little girl were waiting for him. He, like Gordon, was miserably clad, and the child looked paler and thinner than before, and was crouching over a low fire.

"Did you get anything?" said Watson, eagerly.

Gordon held out his hand with the money.

"Is that all?" said he, sneeringly.

"Yes; all."

"Really, you have done well. And could n't you make a raise anywhere else?" said he, looking significantly at him.

"I did n't try."

"How do you think you are going to live if you don't try? There is no use in your being so conscientious. It will not keep you warm, nor give you victuals, nor drink either. Here, Clara, take this, and go to

the provision store, and get us something for breakfast."

"Oh! father, it is so cold!" said she, shiveringly.

"Poor child," said the father, looking at her with compassion, "you need n't go; I will go myself; you shall be more comfortable to-morrow, my girl." And so saying, he went out, but soon returned, and a breakfast was prepared, of which they all partook with keen appetites. Then the two men conversed together for some time, very earnestly, but it was evidently upon some subject on which they could not agree. High words ensued, and poor Clara sat shivering in the corner with cold and terror, her large eyes wandering from one to the other, till at last, her father ended the conversation by saying: "Well, I can do it alone; but mind, you don't get any of the profits. If you won't work you must starve." And the unprincipled man took up his hat and went out. He was soon followed by Gordon, and again the child was left alone.

They both returned in the middle of the afternoon, and stayed until dark, and then Watson again went out, but Gordon stayed in the house all night.

The next morning, the whole city rang with the news of a daring robbery, with an attempt at murder, that had been committed the night previous.

The villain had been taken and committed to prison. Need we say, that the man was Watson?

All that day, Clara looked for her father; but he did not come, and Gordon hesitated to tell her the truth. But she inquired so often, and wished him so much to go and see if he could not find him, that, at last, he told her. But she, evidently, did not wholly understand his meaning. She wanted to know when they would let her father come home. "He did n't know; perhaps not for a great while."

"But can't I go and see him?" said she.

"No! Clara, the men would not let you go in."

"But I would tell them who I was; then would n't they?"

Mr. Gordon shook his head, and the child, looking at him with her eyes full of tears, said: "But I don't want to stay here alone."

That night, Clara crept cold and shivering to her bed, and wept herself to sleep.

The next day, Mr. Gordon was very sick, and unable to rise from his bed. Dissipation and exposure and vice had done their work, and he was seriously ill.

The wretched man was frightened, for he thought he was going to die, and it was fearful to see his terror. Poor Clara, she did all she could for him, but his groans and imprecations were dreadful to hear. And there he lay in his agony, with no hand to comfort, and no voice to speak kindly to him.

Towards afternoon, he was a little calmer, and told Clara to go to an old trunk which stood in the corner of the room, and fetch him a sheet of paper, which she would find there; and also to bring his pencil, which was in the pocket of his vest.

Clara obeyed him, and then, raising himself in bed, he scrawled a few lines, directing them to his wife, and gave them to Clara, telling her to carry them to the post-office, and sank back exhausted on the bed.

CHAPTER VI.

VISIT TO THE CITY.

"Good morning, Mrs. Barton; have heard the news?" said Mrs. Warren, as she entered the house of that lady, very early one forenoon.

"Indeed! what news?" said she, shaking the hand of her visitor, very kindly, and inviting her to be seated.

"Why, Mrs. Gordon has gone to the city, and anybody can guess that it is for something concerning that drunken husband of hers."

"That is strange," said Mrs. Barton, musingly.

"They say that he is sick," continued Mrs. Warren, "and I suppose she will have him brought home. As if she had strength enough to maintain now. It seems to me if I had a husband who had treated me as badly as he has treated her, I would clear of him if I could."

"But what has she done with her children?"

"Oh! the boy, you know, works for Mr. Waitt, and he and his sister are both going to stay there till their mother comes back. I guess Mrs. Waitt will have enough of them."

"How have they got along this winter?" said Mrs. Barton; "our society ought to have helped them had they stood in need."

"Oh! they have got along very well, though I think there was a time, before Henry went to work for Mr. Waitt, when they were rather short. But she must thank herself for it, for she has supplied her husband with money two or three times this winter. She cannot expect us to help her, when she encourages him in his bad habits; and I call it encouraging him, to supply him with money."

"Certainly, Mrs. Warren, but did she go alone to the city?"

"Yes; I suppose, if Mr. Bryant had been here, he would have gone with her, but she went alone; and that is not all, either. You know she owned the small cottage where she lives. Well; she went and mortgaged that to Mr. Waitt, to get money to go to the city, and fetch her husband home."

"Indeed!" said Mrs. Barton, "this is strange news."

"Strange, indeed ; and now, if she should be left without a home, she 'll have nobody to thank but herself. I did hear," continued she, "that Mr. Waitt offered to let her have some money, without the security, but she would not consent."

"What a curious man he is !"

"Curious enough ; he did not wish his wife to join our society. He said, a body might be charitable if there was a mind to be, without the trouble of belonging to a society."

"Did he, indeed, say this ?"

"Yes ; and he says a great many other foolish things."

"But Mrs. Waitt did join the society."

"Oh, yes ; she tried to laugh it off, and said he was only joking, but I know well enough, he was in earnest." And so the lady went on, till she had exhausted her budget of news, and then she departed to some other place.

All Mrs. Warren had said concerning Mrs. Gordon's affairs, was, indeed, true. She had received the letter her husband had sent her, and her woman's heart bled at the thought of his being sick and in want, with no one to take care of him. She had not money

enough to carry her to the city and bring her husband home; for upon this she had set her heart; therefore, she was obliged to mortgage her house, which she did, trusting that her God would still take care of her, as he ever had done.

It was nearly night when the stage left her in the narrow, miserable street, which her husband had mentioned as his place of residence. She found Clara weeping bitterly, and her husband lying, in a kind of stupid state, upon a wretched bed. She entered that lowly dwelling like an angel of mercy. She went to her husband, and taking his hand in hers, and passing the other over his fevered brow, spoke to him kindly. He raised his eyes,—he knew her, and seemed to be thankful that she had come, and in a weak, feeble tone, asked for some drink. “I will get you something very soon,” said she, for she had provided herself with a basket of such articles as she thought she should need; judging, from his letter, that he was in want. But she now turned to the weeping child, and asked her why she wept. Clara raised her pale, thin face from her hands; and said, between her bursting sobs: “I want to see my father.”

"But where is your father, my dear?"

"Mr. Gordon says he is in prison, but I don't know where that is,—do you? If I knew, I would go and see him. Can't you tell me, marm?"


"Poor child!" said Mrs. Gordon, parting the tangled locks from her forehead. "How long has your father been gone?"

"Three days, marm, and Mr. Gordon has been sick all the time, and we had no money, and he wanted something to drink, dreadfully; but I had n't anything to give him but water, and I eat the last piece of bread we had, this morning, and I am *so* hungry!" and the little child looked wistfully at the basket which Mrs. Gordon had deposited on the floor.

"Is it possible? No wonder that your cheek is pale. Here, my little girl, take this," said she, handing her a cracker from the basket, "and when you have eaten that, you shall have more."

Clara devoured it eagerly, and Mrs. Gordon proceeded to kindle a fire, preparatory to making some light gruel for her husband.

"What is your name, my little girl?" said she, as she saw, with pleasure, that Clara had dried her tears, and in her present



gratification, forgotten, for the time, her other sorrow.

"Clara Watson," said she.

"Have you no mother, or brother, or sister?"

"No, marm," said she; "I had a mother and a little brother; but, one day, they died. They looked very white; and some people came and put them in a coffin, and carried them off somewhere. I never saw them again. Do you suppose," continued she, as if a new thought had just entered her brain,—"do you suppose *they* have gone to prison?"

"No, my dear," said Mrs. Gordon; "they have gone to heaven."

"Where is that?" said she; "could n't I go there and see them?"

"No, my dear, not now; when you die, as your mother and little brother did, then you may go to heaven."

"But who is in heaven?"

"God is in heaven, my child."

"But I don't know who he is," said the child, who sat holding her cracker in her hand, forgetful of her hunger, in her earnest curiosity. Mrs. Gordon was surprised, and looking earnestly at her, said: "Did you never hear of God, Clara?"

"I don't know who he is; I have heard my father, and Mr. Gordon, and men in the street, when they have been very angry, say the word; but I don't know who God is. Will he take good care of my mother and little brother?"

"Yes, my child. God is our good Father, who lives in heaven, and sees us all the time. He sees you and I, now, Clara, and hears what we say; and he loves us very much, for we are all his children." The child sat gazing round the room, while Mrs. Gordon was speaking; and when she had finished, she looked earnestly in her face, and said: "Is God my father's father, too? And will he take care of him?"

"Yes; he is the father of us all."

"Then," said she, "I have two fathers."

"Yes, my child; an earthly and a heavenly; and will you not love your heavenly Father?"

"Yes, if he is so good; but I never saw him, and you say that he sees me all the time. I don't know what you mean."

"I will tell you more about this some other time," said Mrs. Gordon, who had now prepared the gruel for her husband, and was ready for him to take it.

Mrs. Gordon saw that her husband needed a physician, but, as it was too late to go for one that night, she concluded to wait till morning, as he seemed more comfortable after taking some refreshment, and fell into a gentle slumber.

She, therefore, directed her attention to Clara; and after having washed her, and combed her hair, she prepared to tell her more of the subject upon which they had been conversing.

Clara was, indeed, very ignorant; how could she have been otherwise? She had never been at school, and never associated with any, excepting the low, wicked companions of her father. Even her mother, when living, was a poor, degraded creature, and had never taught her any good; therefore, everything Mrs. Gordon told her, was new and strange to her young mind.

Mrs. Gordon continued to talk to the child, till she grew sleepy, and then laying her on her miserable bed, if bed it could be called she sank into a profound slumber.

CHAPTER VII.

THE RETURN.

IN the morning, Mrs. Gordon went for a physician to come and see her husband. He gave, however, but little hope. He said he might live some time; he might even get better, but he would never again be well.

"And do you think he could be moved without injury?" inquired Mrs. Gordon.

"How far, madam, would you wish to remove him?"

"To Glendale, where I reside."

"I do not think it would injure him. It would, indeed, be better for him there, as he would be farther removed from the east winds, which are very injurious to him."

"I am very thankful to hear you say this, as I feared it would not answer."

"I think there would be no danger. Take him some pleasant day." And after a few simple prescriptions, the physician departed.

Mr. Gordon seemed to have but little consciousness, and sometimes his mind wandered. His wife was almost in hopes he

would continue thus till after his removal, as she feared he might object.

And what was she to do with Clara, the poor, friendless child? She could not think of leaving her alone in the city; and in truth, she had become very much attached to her; and although she knew not how she should be able to support her, yet she felt as if she must take her with her.

"Julia," said Mrs. Warren, calling her daughter to her one day, about noon; "do come here, and see if you know who that is stopping in that carriage, at Mrs. Gordon's."

Julia quickly obeyed her mother.

"Why, mother, that is Mrs. Gordon herself, who has just got out of the carriage, and now the coachman is assisting her to remove Mr. Gordon. He must be very sick, judging from his appearance."

"But who, in the name of wonder, is the girl who stands there? she looks almost like a beggar child."

"I don't know, I'm sure; but she is following them into the house!"

"Well, if Mrs. Gordon is n't the strangest woman I ever saw! Now, I suppose, that is some poor child she has picked up among

her husband's precious acquaintances, and has taken her out of what she would call pity." Mrs. Warren was not the only one who wondered at the arrival of Mrs. Gordon with her husband and the stranger child.

Henry and Amy were very glad to see their mother, but they hardly knew what to say to their father.

Amy's reserve wore off first. She pitied him because he looked so pale and sick; but, as yet, he took but little notice of any one.

The children soon became acquainted with Clara, and Amy's surprise was unbounded, when she found she did not even know her letters, and she instantly set to work to teach them to her. Clara was very tractable, and Henry, too, assisted as teacher; so she got along very fast. With Henry's aid, Mrs. Gordon procured her a decent dress, and then sent her to school with Amy; and the children, unconscious of the care and anxiety of their mother, were very happy.

The weather was now, every day, growing warmer, and Mr. Gordon's health began to improve, and, with that improvement, old feelings returned; and, among others, an ardent desire for strong drink.

He was ashamed, at first, to ask for it,

out the desire grew stronger, till it was a constant thought by day and night.

One day, when his wife had gone out to carry home some work, he called Clara to him, and said: "Can't you go down to the store with Amy, and get me a pint of brandy?"

"But where is the money?" said the girl.

"Tell them it is for Mrs. Gordon, and I think they will trust you."

Clara and Amy set out, but soon returned with the information that they kept no ardent spirits.

"What shall I do, then?" said the poor man, in despair. "I must have some, or I shall die."

In a few minutes, Mrs. Gordon returned. "Mamma," said little Amy, running up to her, "poor, sick papa wants some brandy, can't you give it him?"

Mrs. Gordon gazed with surprise, first at the child, and then at her husband; who looked confused, and then said: "I must have it, Emma; I shall die if I don't!"

"Poor papa," said little Amy, "don't let him die; do give him some."

"You run out, dear, and see if Henry is not coming."

Mrs. Gordon reasoned with her husband and tried to persuade him to abstain from strong drink. Her earnest words had some effect upon him, and he promised to try and do without it.

Weeks passed away,—her husband's health slowly improved, and she saw, with pleasure, that he was not so passionate as formerly; and, although he never asked again for strong drink, she knew that the struggle with appetite was very hard; and she, therefore, encouraged him by every means in her power.

He never said anything concerning his being removed to Glendale, although, at other times, he had been so strongly opposed to his wife's wish that he would return; but he never would see any who called to inquire after his health, but studiously avoided them all.

Henry still continued with Mr. Waitt, who liked him very much, and gave him the promise of increased wages. He improved all his leisure moments by study.

Clara, too, was growing up a beautiful girl; and there was so much for her to learn, and so much in Glendale, and its inhabitants, that was new to her, that she enjoyed

herself very much, and had no sad thoughts, excepting of her father. She had been with Mrs. Gordon but a short time, when the news of his death reached her. He died in prison, a sad, a wretched death; and probably Clara and Mrs. Gordon were the only ones who wept for him. They had had many conversations respecting him, and Clara's opening mind fully comprehended his true character, and why he had been imprisoned; and as she grew older, she sorrowed more for his sins and vices than for his death.

There was much in Clara's disposition that Mrs. Gordon was obliged to eradicate; but she was gentle and yielding, and felt that, if she was corrected, it was for her good.

But this increase of family was a great care for Mrs. Gordon. Notwithstanding Henry's wages, and the money she had taken up on the mortgage, together with what she and Clara could earn, they were often in want of money. But it was summer now,—bright, glorious summer,—and they could live as the birds and flowers lived. But Mrs. Gordon really dreaded the winter; for, as cold weather came on, she feared her husband would be worse. His

constitution was broken up, and he was like a child; removed from bad influences and strong drink, he had grown gentle and yielding, and would sit for hours listening to his wife, as she talked to him of good and holy things. He was but the wreck of other days; yet still, as his wife looked at him, she was grateful,—grateful that he was no longer a wanderer from his home, sinning against himself, his family, and his God,—grateful that he had come home to die, and that he was so gentle, and would listen so patiently to all she wished to say to him. And she was so glad, too, that he loved his children; their power was great over him. And as the strong passions of the man gave way, his better and holier feelings grew stronger. Oh! not unrewarded was Mrs. Gordon for all her care, her trouble, and anxiety. Not all unanswered were the prayers she had sent up to Heaven for his safety. It was no small thing to her that he had returned, though at a late hour, to his home. And had not her gentleness, her love, and her untiring kindness, been, in some measure, the means of restoring him, (sick and dying it may be, but still, restoring him) to his family and virtue!

Ere the autumn passed away, Mr. Gor-

don was confined wholly to his bed. He bore his last sickness patiently, and ere his last hour came, he called his son to his bedside, and desiring that all others should leave the room, he conversed with him alone for a long time. No one knew what it was the dying man said to his son, but Henry came from that chamber, with his eyes red with weeping.

He died, and the first snows of winter were shed upon his grave. And they mourned for him in that lowly home, and shed tears over his grave, and he was ever after remembered by them with affection.

It took all the money that Mrs. Gordon had raised on the mortgage of the house, and it was now mortgaged to its full value, to pay the expenses of the funeral. Mr. Waitt was very kind to her, and told her she could live in the house as long as she wished; but she felt it was not now her own.

Another long winter passed away. Henry's wages had been increased, and these, with what Mrs. Gordon could earn, supported the family very comfortably, but it was impossible to lay up anything towards redeeming the house.

One day, towards the latter part of spring, a travelling carriage drove up to the house

of Mr. Byrant, and he and his family alighted.

"Mother," said little Amy, "Mr. Bryant has got home, and Mrs. Bryant and George. Oh! I am so glad."

'T was not long, before, sure enough, George came running down to the cottage, and, "How do you do, Mrs. Gordon?" said he, shaking her kindly by the hand; "and how is my little Amy? Why, how you have grown!" said he, holding her from him, and looking at her with astonishment.

"And what a great man you are!" said Amy, standing on tiptoe, as if to look up into his face.

Many were the questions asked by Henry and Amy, and many and long were the stories George told of his travels.

The meeting between the parents was not so noisy and boisterous as with the children. Mrs. Gordon told her friend what had happened since she had been gone, and she listened with unfeigned surprise, and mingled her tears with the widow when she told of her husband. "I, too," said she, "have watched long, and anxiously, by the bedside of my sick husband, but the Lord has seen fit to spare his life, and he is now quite recovered."

CHAPTER VIII.

AN ADOPTED DAUGHTER.

THE happiness of the children was soon broken in upon; for George must leave for school, in order to prepare himself for college.

The home of Mr. and Mrs. Bryant seemed lonely after their son's departure, and one evening, when they were sitting together, Mrs. Bryant observed: "It seems hard for Mrs. Gordon to have the charge of an extra child, and one having no claim upon her but pity."

"But surely, you do not blame her for taking the child, as she did, from the midst of vicious influences."

"No, certainly not; and she herself, I think, has never regretted it; but Clara goes to school every day, and cannot be of much help to her; and, of course, she but adds to her burden. It is her ardent wish to redeem her house, if possible; it will, however, be a difficult task at present."

"By the way, Mary, allowing me to in-

interrupt you, I saw Mr. Waitt to day, and have taken the mortgage out of his hands; so the house is now mine."

"Ah!" said his wife, looking up archly into his face, as if she already comprehended his benevolent design; "I am glad to hear it, and I know by your looks what you intend to do; but you cannot guess my project so easily."

"What is it?" said he, laughing, "to found an asylum for orphans, or raise a fund for educating indigent children?"

"Oh, no! none of these great and mighty things; I leave them for wiser heads than mine. It is but a small thing," said she, archly, "even to take little Clara Watson, and adopt her as a daughter; thereby doing a good deed to Mrs. Gordon—and she will be so much company for me; for, now George is gone, the house seems so lonely, it really makes me sad. And she is such a sweet child," continued she, looking up earnestly in his face; "I think you will like her very much. What do you think of it, James?"

"But why don't you take Amy? you know she is my favorite!"

"Why, James, you do not consider, surely. Do you think Mrs. Gordon would part

with her own child? Trust me, she would have to work harder than she has ever done yet, ere she would consent. And what would the proud, high-spirited Henry say! No, no, James, you surely must be beside yourself to think of such a thing. But with Clara the case is different. Though Mrs. Gordon and all of them love her very much, still they would consider that it was for her good, and would be willing she should come. This is why I mentioned Clara; not but I should be just as willing to take Amy, but, even in our charity, we must consider the feelings of others."

"Mary," said her husband, looking into the animated, and yet concerned face of his wife, "you are right, as you always are; I merely mentioned Amy, because I loved the child so well. Clara, you know, I have hardly seen. I own I ought to have been more considerate of the feelings of Mrs. Gordon. You can do just as your kind heart prompts; and when you go to make the proposal, you can take this paper to Mrs. Gordon, and tell her to accept it as a present from me."

"Thank you, kindly, James, for yielding so readily to my wishes; and also for your

own charitable deed. Mrs. Gordon will be so happy!" said she, putting the paper in her bosom. "Poor Emma! she has seen a great deal of trouble in her life. I hope her happiest days are yet to come. She will not be obliged to work so hard, now the house is really hers again; though I suppose I shall have hard work to make her accept the gift. But I must take Clara, that will be a little from her burden, though I suppose I shall be obliged to use a great deal of eloquence to make her agree to that. But I must have the dear child, and I believe my charity is rather selfish after all; but her dark earnest eyes have really charmed me, and then there is something so original in all her sayings and doings, that I have taken quite a fancy to her."

All this, Mrs. Bryant had said as if to herself, but here she was interrupted by her husband.

"Speaking of Clara," said he, "do you know who is her father?"

The countenance of Mrs. Bryant changed. She was afraid that now her husband would find an insurmountable objection to her plan, and her voice trembled as she answered, —

"I am afraid I cannot tell you anything

very favorable of him, for he is no other than that Watson who committed that daring robbery, some time ago, and was sentenced to the State's Prison for a certain term of years, but who died a short time after sentence was pronounced. But, poor child, she is not to blame for her father's misconduct."

"Certainly not; she is the more to be pitied. Does she ever speak of her father?"

"Sometimes, and always with affection. He was, by her representation, very kind to her. It was, perhaps, the only redeeming trait in his character. The man is not wholly depraved, who still cherishes parental affection."

Mrs. Bryant was right in her supposition that she should be obliged to use all her eloquence to persuade Mrs. Gordon to part with Clara. And it was only her strong conviction that it was for the good of the child, that at last decided her to accept Mrs. Bryant's kind offer.

And about the cancelling of the mortgage she was still more resolute. But she was at last persuaded, though much against her will, although fully sensible of the kindness of heart that prompted the deed.

And thus, after a great many words, a great deal of eloquence, and many protestations of gratitude, it was all settled. Mrs. Gordon and her children were in their own home, and Clara went to her new home, sad to part with Mrs. Gordon, and Henry, and Amy, although it could hardly be called a parting, as they should see each other every day.

CHAPTER IX.

THE NOBLE RESOLVE.

SOME years passed, unmarked by anything particularly worthy of record. Glendale wore its usual appearance, and the characters of our little history still kept the even tenor of their ways. Blessing and blessed, Mr. and Mrs. Bryant still lived, and Clara had grown up good and beautiful, and already had her kind patrons found themselves more than repaid for all their generosity.

George was now at college, but of him more hereafter. Pass we now to the humble cottage of the widow and her two children. It has been much improved internally and externally, and everywhere shows marks of taste and industry. It is evening, and we will enter. Seated at a table are the three occupants. Mrs. Gordon looks a very little older, but there is a sweet, happy expression upon her face, and a tender light in her eye, as it rests upon her children. Amy and her brother are bending over the same book; he is evidently aiding her in her studies, for she

is still a school-girl. She has not yet passed into womanhood; her heart still lingers about her childish sports, and even now, when her brother is endeavoring to explain some difficult passage in her studies, her mind wanders amid the flowers and birds, in green, shady nooks, and pleasant places.

'You will never understand it, Amy,' said Henry, almost impatiently, "if you do not give your attention; I hardly think you have heard a word I have told you."

"Oh yes, I have, Henry! let me see, where is the place?" said she, bending over the book till her sunny hair fell like a cloud over her childish face. "But if you will tell me once more, I will pay attention. I could n't help it, but I was thinking about the robin's nest up in the old cherry-tree, and I was going to ask you to climb up and see how many eggs there were. Will you, Henry?"

"You are a genius, Amy, that is certain," said her brother, the shade of displeasure passing from his countenance; "which had you rather I would do, climb the tree, and look into the nest, or explain your lesson?"

"I had rather you would climb the tree, for I cannot do that, but I might perhaps puzzle out this lesson, though to be sure it is very hard."

"Well, I don't know; I think it is doubtful; but if you will attend to me now, to-morrow I will see what I can do towards examining your robin's nest."

The lesson was explained, and in a short time, Amy retired for the night, but Henry and his mother still sat there, one busy with her work, and the other with his books.

Henry had grown tall and manly. There was decision and firmness marked in every feature, the light of a noble intellect shone from his dark eye, and if sometimes that eye flashed a little proudly, and the heart rose passionately and quickly in his bosom, it but marked him more strongly, as the same Henry Gordon we first knew. But the quick, passionate boy had had a mother's kind hand to direct, and a mother's kind voice to soothe his passions, and not all in vain had she labored to eradicate the one great fault of his character. But there was much in her son which was noble, much which she loved, and of which she was proud. He had been her comfort and her stay; for her sake he had toiled, and for her, too, he had striven to subdue his temper; and if sometimes, even now, it broke out, one glance at her sad, grieved countenance, would subdue it. Oh, blessed was that mother's living influence!

Evening after evening, for years, had Henry pursued his studies, sometimes till a late hour, and now the poor, lowly boy was a man in intellect and knowledge.

"Henry," said his mother, "it is time to retire. I have finished my work, and you must finish yours."

"Well, mother, you have worked long enough, too long; I did not think it was so late. But I cannot go now, indeed; I am not tired at all."

"But, my child," said the mother, taking a chair beside him, and laying her hand upon the book before him, "I cannot allow you to sit up so late: it is too much, after your duties of the day."

"Oh, no," said he, looking earnestly and kindly in her face; "I perform my duties during the day much easier thinking of the pleasure of the evening before, and of the hours of the coming one, when I can sit down in our own still room, with my books, my mother, and my sister."

"I know that study was always pleasant to you, and that is why I kept you at school as long as I could, though many blamed me; but not till the offer came from yourself, did I feel as if I ought to take you away. Tell me, my child, was it not a great sacrifice?"

"Yes, mother, it was; but it was needed. You needed all my services then, and though it would have been much pleasanter and easier for me to have continued at school, yet I saw it was not my duty. And then I thought of the instances of self-taught men who had risen to the highest stations in despite of every obstacle; and what man has done man may do. And it seemed as if study was pleasanter ever after."

"But, my son, why this incessant study now; have you not learning enough for common purposes?"

"Mother," said Henry, eagerly, "can one get too much learning? The more I study, the more earnest is my craving after knowledge."

"But what use do you intend to make of all your knowledge?"

"Use! mother, a great deal of use. There are higher paths than those I now tread. There is a world to be benefited. There are many homes darker, even, than once was ours—homes where there comes no light, and over which brood sin and misery. There is a great deal of noble work to be done, and how can we go forth to this work, without being prepared? Mother," continued the now

excited Henry, "my father's life has been a lesson to me. Sad and bitter was it at first, bringing with it shame and disgrace. As I have grown older, I have thought much of it. I have seen how evil passions, intemperance, and sin, have marred the fair face of earth. And why is all this suffered? Is it not to rouse the feelings, and call forth the energies of noble minds? And, mother, I long to go forth to the great work. There are those who will laugh at me,—those who know my poverty, and what they call my shame,—but I am sure of my mother's blessing, and my heavenly Father's approval."

Mrs. Gordon listened in silent astonishment till her son had finished, and then, looking into the animated and glowing face which was turned to hers for approval, and laying her hand upon his forehead, said, kindly, "Truly, I bless thee, my son, and may He who is the Father of the fatherless, add His blessing unto mine. But, my son, it is a difficult path you have chosen, and although I would not discourage you, I would warn you to be on your guard. In such great undertakings,—in the contemplation of doing so much good,—we are apt to forget the small and sure opportunities, that lie close around

us. **Never** overlook these. Do the duty which lies nearest, and never, in your desire to reform the evil passions of your fellow-men, let them run riot in your own heart. Ever live up to the principles you lay down for others. Let theory and practice be one. Your only motive now is the good of your fellow-men ; let not that motive be perverted ; it is the purest and holiest that ever actuated the breast of man. And may God bless you, my son, and aid you in every good work ; for, remember, that without Him, you can do nothing."

There had ever existed between the mother and son the most perfect confidence, and now their conversation was long and earnest. But not until some time after his mother had retired, did the young student leave his books and his pleasant occupations.

Well had Henry Gordon fulfilled his duty to his mother. By attention to his business, he had won the respect of his employer, till he now enjoyed a sufficient salary for the ample support of his mother and sister.

His heart failed not in his undertaking. There was a strength and an endurance in his character, rarely to be found in one so young. He was the right one to go forward

to a good work. There was no faltering or swerving from the right; enough for him that he saw the way; strength came when needed, to walk therein.

But, oh, that mother's love had been to him a guide and a protection, and her kind words and counsels had guided aright the quick and passionate heart, and her influence had many a time saved him from turning into forbidden paths! And was she not rewarded for all her care and anxiety? Truly, she was blest in her children. Amy grew up gentle and good. Her sphere was the affections, and if she lacked the brilliant intellect of her brother, her sense of duty and right was as strong as his. Her only eloquence lay in her clear eye and winning voice, but these were irresistible. The same in womanhood as in childhood, giving happiness wherever she went.

CHAPTER X.

THE PROMISE AND THE TEMPTATION.

It was vacation time, and all was expectation at the house of Mr. Bryant.

"It seems a great while since George was at home," said Mrs. Bryant, as she busied herself in making preparations for his return, the day before he was expected. "I don't know why, but it has never seemed so long before; it may be because he has not written as often as he has usually done."

"Perhaps he has been so busy with his studies, he has not had time to write," remarked Clara.

"Perhaps it is so. I hope it is nothing worse." But a shade of anxiety passed over the countenance of the mother.

The morrow came, and with it came George Bryant. He greeted his parents kindly and respectfully, and when his mother asked him why he had not written oftener, he replied, laughingly: "Why, between fun and study, mother, to tell the truth, I could not get time to write."

"I would not have you neglect your studies, George," said she, seriously; "but I think you might have spared an hour or two from sport, to write to your mother."

"I know I ought to have written oftener, but if I sat down to writing, some one was sure to come into my room, and it would be—George, go here, and George, go there, and I had, indeed, but little time to myself."

"But you could have said you were engaged."

"But they would not have been put off in that manner."

"I almost fear for you, George."

"Why, mother?"

"I fear you will forget your mother, and the precepts she has endeavored to instil into your mind."

"Forget you, dear mother, never!" said George, earnestly.

It was not a needless alarm that the mother felt for her son. While he remained under her influence, he was all that she could wish. But his disposition was one that took its character from surrounding objects. A dangerous one to go out into the world, and mingle with its different phases. He had not enough firmness and decision;

he yielded to every passing influence, whether good or bad, and often, without really intending wrong, went sadly astray.

It will readily be seen, that a college was a bad place for one of his temperament; and, need we say, that he had yielded to the current of things around him,—that he joined in every act of rebellion, and in every kind of innocent sport, as they called it, that was going on. He was an easy prey to a certain class who had singled him out as their victim. Step by step, they were luring him on to vice, and without anything really vicious or wicked in his character, he was entering thoughtlessly upon a path leading to ruin.

Alas for the mother! whose quick eye saw that all was not right. The heart that had felt so readily for others' unhappiness, was brooding over its own anxiety; and the eye that had ever a tear for others' misfortunes, wept now for her only son.

The present vacation lasted for a number of weeks, and during that time, George had yielded to the pure atmosphere around him, and determined in his own mind, that he would henceforth pursue his studies with more diligence, and endeavor to shun the

company of those who were so ready to lead him astray.

Henry and George were as good friends as ever. But the collegian could boast of no superiority, for the poor, self-taught student, was far before him in intellectual attainments; and George felt it, and again he determined to pursue his studies more diligently.

Pleasant to him were those few weeks. With Clara and Amy, he wandered in each familiar spot. Where they had gone for violets in early spring, on the rocky knoll where the honey-suckles grew, and along the old walls where they had picked blackberries, and down by the water's edge, to the very bank where Amy had sat to bathe her feet in the water, on that eventful day.

"Dost remember it, Amy?" said George, as they seated themselves under a tree that grew by the water's edge.

"Oh, yes! very well! but it was a just punishment for running away and disobeying my mother."

"Really, Amy, you are quite a philosopher."

"Henry calls me a laughing-philosopher. I do think it does one good to laugh. Now,

Clara seldom laughs, nor Henry, unless when I come in and say something very bright. But when they are alone, they are poring over some book, or sitting close together talking so low, it is a wonder to me how they can hear each other. But they never laugh; at least, I never hear them. But, perhaps," continued she, demurely, "I shall not laugh so much when I am so old. Do you think I shall, Clara?"

"I cannot tell, really, Amy. Sometimes I think the habit grows with your growth, and strengthens with your strength."

"Oh, dear!" said she, shaking her head; "then I shall laugh frightfully loud by the time I am an old woman."

"But, if Clara and Henry do not join you, you must have all your sport to yourself," said George.

"I do get most provoked at them sometimes, and go off and leave them to themselves. But I presume they like that very well, for I generally find them, when I come back, in the same place where I left them."

"I don't think laughing is your only recommendation," said Clara, blushing.

"Don't be offended, Clara, dear," said she, looking archly into her face; "I only

wanted to tell George how we passed the time during his absence."

"He must be much obliged to you for the information."

"I am exceedingly so. It seems that Henry and you get along very well during my absence; but my little Amy, as I always have called her, and still must, is left entirely to her own resources. I think I shall be obliged to come home, were it only to keep her company."

"When are you going to leave college, George?" said Amy, lifting up her eyes to his, and throwing back the curls from her forehead.

"I must stay there some time, yet, I suppose. Why did you ask?"

"Why," said she, slowly; "I don't like to have you stay there, very well."

"Why not, Amy?"

"Oh, I don't know. Are they all good people there?"

"Not all as good as your mother and mine, and Henry and Clara. Why, what makes you ask, Amy?"

"Nothing, George; only, your mother looks very sad when I speak about your going back; and the other day, when I told

her what you told me, when you first came home, about the students, she said they were very wicked, and the tears came into her eyes. And, George," continued she, very earnestly, "I wish you would not go back."

"But I must go, Amy; father wishes it, and I must go, indeed."

"But you will not have anything to do with those wicked students,—will you, George?"

"I should think you was anything but a laughing philosopher now, Amy," said he, trying to turn the conversation.

"But say, George," said she, not appearing to heed what he said, in her earnestness; "say that you will not have anything to do with them. And promise that you will write oftener, for when I go to the post-office, and come back without a letter for some of us, your mother looks very sad!"

"You require a great many promises, Amy!"

"And you have not said yes, to one of them." And the fair girl dropped her head upon her bosom, and her voice was low and sad.

"But I will say yes, to all you ask," said

he, soothingly; "and I will write you often."

Amy again looked up, and a beaming smile spread itself all over her features.

"You have promised," said she, "and now, you must perform."

It was no light thing that George had promised. It was, indeed, one which he found hard of fulfilment. And if, after he returned to his studies, he endeavored to keep from temptation, it was but for a time. Again he yielded. Money was squandered thoughtlessly away. His studies were neglected; he fell in with the vices of those around him, and his name was placed with those, reckless of all order, and the laws of the institution.

CHAPTER XI.

SOCIETY GOSSIP, AND A SAD INTERVIEW.

A YEAR passed—and now, to understand how matters stand with the characters of our little history, we will walk into the parlor of Mrs. Barton, whom our readers will recollect was chosen President of the Benevolent Society. This is one of their meetings, and here I think we may be sure of learning all we wish to know. There is our old friend, Mrs. Warren, surrounded by a number of ladies, all employed with their needles, while their tongues are not altogether useless.

“Were you at the temperance lecture, last evening, Mrs. Waitt?” said Mrs. Warren.

“Yes; and I was pleased to see so full an attendance. They all seemed very much interested, and I thought that a great many signed the pledge.”

“No doubt,” said Mrs. Warren, “a great many were drawn thither by curiosity. Henry Gordon being so well known, and withal so young, I suppose they wished to see how he would succeed.”

"And I think they were well satisfied; at least all were whom I have heard mention the subject. How were you pleased, Mrs. Stacy?"

"Very much indeed," said the lady spoken to. "I never recollect hearing a lecture of the kind in which I was so interested. Some parts of it were truly affecting. He is, indeed, a very promising young man; his mother has cause to be proud of him."

"And she is proud enough of him, I can tell you," said Mrs. Warren. "They say that he is preparing for the ministry. I think he had better wait until he is a little older; though, to be sure, he has assurance and confidence enough for anything."

"His talents are of a high order, and I understand that he has studied more than a great many older men," said Mrs. Stacy.

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. Waitt, earnestly. "Henry has studied a great deal. His mother tells me that he sits up till nearly twelve o'clock every night."

"I should not think he would be very fit for his duties the next day," remarked Mrs. Warren.

"Mr. Waitt is perfectly satisfied with him," was the cool reply.

"Such close study must be injurious to his health," said Mrs. Stacy, addressing Mrs. Waitt.

"His mother fears that it will be so; but she cannot prevail upon him to relinquish any of his hours of study. He has, indeed, been a blessing to his mother."

"Is it true that he is preparing for the ministry?"

"I believe that such is his intention."

"Well," said Mrs. Warren, "he was passionate and hot-headed enough when a boy. I hope he will conquer his own temper, before he gets up in the pulpit and tells older people their duty. I have seen enough of his temper."

"All have their faults," said Mrs. Waitt, "and it would be well, if we all kept as good watch over them as the person in question. I know Henry's temper is naturally quick. But the passionate boy has grown up into the firm, unswerving man."

"Do you know why Mrs. Bryant is not here to-day?" said Mrs. Barton, who now joined the group.

"She is not well," answered Mrs. Warren. "They say that her son's conduct worries her dreadfully."

"Indeed! I had heard that he was rather a wild young man, but I thought that the general character of collegians."

"It may be nothing more. But Mrs. Bryant is so particular, and thought so much of and expected so much from George, that to have him expelled from college, is too much for her."

"Was he, indeed, expelled?" said Mrs. Stacy.

"About the same thing," said Mrs. Warren.

"Poor Mrs. Bryant! Then he is at home at present."

"Yes, I saw him pass with Clara, just before I left home. By the way, ladies, did you know that Clara Bryant and Henry Gordon were engaged?"

"No, indeed," said two or three voices.

"She will make a good minister's wife," said Mrs. Stacy, "she is so kind and thoughtful. When are they to be married?"

"I think not at present," answered Mrs. Warren. "Indeed, I wonder you had not heard of it before. I expect it has been a settled thing for some time."

"But I am really very sorry for Mrs. Bryant," said the kind-hearted Mrs. Stacy.

"Rich folks have their troubles," remarked

Mrs. Warren. "They must not expect everything to go smooth with them any more than the rest of the world. They must send their sons to college, and they must have just as much money as they want, and it is no wonder if, sometimes, they do not turn out as well as they expected."

As no one seemed to gainsay Mrs. Warren's remark, or ask further questions, we will leave the ladies to their employment.

On the same afternoon, Mrs. Bryant sat alone; Clara and George having, as Mrs. Warren has informed us, walked out together. There was a deep shade of care and anxiety on her face, and the tears were falling fast upon her hands, which lay clasped in her lap. She was so absorbed in thought, that she heard not the opening of the door, nor a light step; and Amy Gordon had entered and approached her, ere she was conscious of her presence.

Sweet Amy Gordon! A shade older is the sweet, childish face, but yet more lovely. There is more of thought in the glance of her clear eye, and more of decision and firmness about the mouth. Her small, fairy-like figure glided gracefully into the room. When she opened the door, there was a smile upon her

lip; but when she saw Mrs. Bryant heeded not her approach, and that her head was bent as if in thought, the smile faded away, and she went silently up to her, and put her arm around her neck. The caress was returned with affection, though silently.

"What is the matter, Mrs. Bryant? Is it for George you are weeping?" said Amy kindly.

"Yes, my dear, I fear for my child. He has fallen into bad company and bad habits. He has yielded to temptation."

"But now he has left college, he has left all these evil companions and temptations behind him. Let us hope that he will again be as he has been."

"Alas, my child! the evil habits still cling to him. He is not contented in his home; the quiet is not congenial to his feelings; he longs to be away in the excitement of business or pleasure."

Amy knew not what to say, for she had noticed that George was not happy in his home; she therefore stood by the side of Mrs. Bryant in silence.

"Were you not in search of Clara? She and George went out together, a short time since. We will walk out, and see if we cannot meet them."

They proceeded as far as the house of Mrs. Gordon, where Mrs. Bryant stopped, but Amy still continued her walk. The maiden was very sad, and her step was slow, and her eyes bent upon the ground. She walked on, till she came to the tree that overhung the water. She seated herself upon the bank, and ere long she was joined by George, who seated himself familiarly by her side.

He had grown to a very tall, handsome young man. His complexion was fair, and his whole face rather prepossessing.

"Amy," said he, "I came to ask a favor of you."

"What is it, George?" said she, looking up.

"I was going to ask it of Clara, but I could not; I feared she would not grant it; but I thought my own little Amy would not refuse."

These words were spoken in a low, earnest tone, and the cheek of the fair girl burned as she listened.

"If it is not anything wrong, I will grant it."

"Amy, I am in debt, and have no money to pay. I am afraid to ask my father, for fear he will wish to know what I am going to do with it, and I could not tell him. Once

he used to give me money without any question, but of late it is not so."

"And why could you not tell him?"

George shrank from the pure, innocent look of the fair girl, and a flush passed over his cheek as he answered :

"Because they are gambling debts." The face that was raised to his, turned sadly away.

"But they must be paid, and that soon, Amy. I had a letter to-day, in which the creditor refuses to wait more than a week longer. What shall I do, Amy?"

"Indeed, George," said she, in a trembling voice, "I don't know; can I assist you in any way?"

"Yes, Amy, you can," said he, taking her small hand in his. "Go to my father, and plead my cause. I dare not go; I could not stand and look into his sad eyes, and hear his low, reproachful tone. But you will go, will you not? You will find the amount in this bill, and I will wait for you here."

"But is it my duty to go, George?"

"You will go for my sake, will you not?"

"But will you promise to gamble no more, and—"

"Yes, Amy, I will promise."

"You promise lightly, George, and I am afraid that you will break it as—"

"As I have done before, you would say. I know it, Amy; but grant me this favor, and I will promise and try to be all you wish."

Amy took the bill in her hand, and with a heavy heart, turned her steps to the house of Mr. Bryant. She went the shortest way, and as she neared the house, her step was quick and nervous. She opened the door, and passed on through the different rooms, till she came to the study, where she knew Mr. Bryant generally sat at this hour. This door she opened as noiselessly as she had done the others, and stood in the presence of him she sought. Her limbs shook, her cheek grew pale and her voice tremulous, as she strove to speak.

How she did her errand, we need not now stop to explain. Suffice it to say, she received the money, which she held fast in her hand, while, with quick, fleet steps, she retraced the path to the water. George still sat there, awaiting her return.

"How have you succeeded?" said he, as she resumed her seat beside him.

"Here it is," said she, handing him the money, which he took eagerly.

"Thank you, Amy. But what did father say?"

"George," said she, earnestly, and raising her tearful eye to his face, "George, you are breaking your parents' hearts. There are deep lines upon your father's face, and the tears are ever in your mother's eyes. Have you not seen all this?"

"Yes, Amy, and I can stand it no longer. I am going away."

"Going away, George! Do you wish to kill them entirely?"

"No; but I cannot stay here. I will go away, and when I am worthy to be their son, I will return, and not till then."

It was in vain that Amy tried to dissuade him from his purpose.

"And you will remember me, will you not, Amy?" The tears were falling fast down her cheeks; she made him no reply, and sadly and slowly they walked towards home.

CHAPTER XII.

SORROW AND GRIEF.

GEORGE BRYANT left his home, and went no one knew whither. People wondered and surmised, talked of it for awhile, and then gave it up, when something new came up and attracted their attention.

But there was a gloom upon the once happy home. As Amy had said, there were deep lines upon the father's face. Sorrow had done what time had failed to do. And the mother, too, mourned for her son,—the wandering, erring one.

But they heard nothing from him. If he was doing well, he would certainly have written. Alas! they feared that he was dead, or had gone further in the paths of vice.

Henry Gordon was fast winning for himself a great and noble name. Men appreciated his talents, and listened with eagerness and pleasure whenever he spoke. He was ordained a minister of the gospel, and he went to the work with a strong and willing mind, but yet a humble, lowly heart.

Time passed, and he was settled over a flourishing society, in a neighboring city. But he still remained, to the astonishment of his people, unwedded.

Mrs. Warren was right when she said that Henry and Clara were engaged. It was indeed, an engagement of long standing, and they now looked forward to a union at some future time; but Clara could not think of leaving those who had been as parents to her in their affliction. She was now their greatest earthly comfort, and she felt it her duty to remain with them for the present. She rejoiced in Henry's good fortune, and sympathized with him in all his feelings, and they met very often, for the city in which he resided was not a great distance from Glerdale.

Some time had now passed since George Bryant left his home so abruptly, and nothing had since been heard from him. It was about this time that Clara received a letter from Henry, which we will take the liberty to lay before our readers.

"DEAR CLARA:

"I think I have at length, after many unsuccessful efforts, obtained some clue to the residence of our George. But I hardly

know whether to rejoice or weep at the discovery.

"I was called out, last evening, to attend the death-bed of one of my parishioners. It was nearly ten o'clock, when I started for home. I had proceeded but a short distance, and was passing one of the saloons which are scattered all over the city, when my attention was attracted by a loud noise, proceeding from a number of young men who were just coming out of the place. I turned round, and saw three young men, evidently much intoxicated. The light from the street lamp, and from the windows of the shop, flashed full upon the face of one of the number, and I knew, in a moment, notwithstanding the sad change in his appearance, that it was George. He was intoxicated like the rest, and as he reeled past me on the sidewalk, a fearful oath escaped his lips! O, Clara! this was dreadful! The death-scene, to which I had just been a witness, was one of heavenly peace, and this sight jarred frightfully on my feelings. My brain whirled for a few moments; but at length I summoned strength to follow the young men, to what, I suppose, was their boarding-place; and marking the street and the house, I departed. But there

was no sleep for me, that night. Poor George ! with all his noble faculties, and his kind, generous heart, to be left to live such a wretched life ! My heart bleeds for him, and for his father and mother, and for our own sweet Amy ; for do you not see, Clara, that the sweet girl is sad, and unlike her former self ? Alas ! to think how many hearts has this one dereliction from duty brought to sadness and sorrow ! I will seek him out ; perhaps he may yet be reformed. His nature is one easy to work upon, and this has been one great cause of his being led away.

“O, Clara ! the city is full of hundreds of such young men, and they go on in their wicked career, and fathers’ hopes are crushed, and mothers’ hearts broken, and loved ones are deserted and weep in loneliness. When I think of all this, I exclaim : “What good can one individual do, among so much sin and misery. But, oh ! it is no small thing, to save even one from misery,—to bring up one from the haunts of vice. His influence may reform another, and another, and so, all great and good works are performed. I shall, instantly, go in search of our erring brother. You need not mention the contents of this letter to Mr. and Mrs.

Bryant, as it may raise hopes which may not be realized. I wrote to inform you of the circumstance, for I knew I was sure of your sympathy, and approval of my undertaking. I will soon write to you again, to inform you of my progress."

Just as Clara had finished reading this letter, Amy entered.

"Have you a letter from Henry? What does he say, Clara, that has brought the tears into your eyes?"

Clara hesitated, and knew not what to answer.

"He is not sick, is he?"

"No, Amy, he is quite well."

"Then what is it, Clara? Can you not confide in me?"

"I am fearful that it will make you feel very unpleasantly!"

"Does it concern me? then surely I must hear it."

"It concerns us all, my dear."

"Is it any news from George?" said she, eagerly; "do let me see it, Clara, or tell it me."

"Here, Amy, you may read it for yourself, only do not let it affect you too much."

Amy took the letter, and read it all through,

and though her cheek grew very pale, and her lip quivered, she betrayed no other sign of emotion. She handed the letter back, and then, raising her eyes, which were swimming with tears, she said, in a faint voice: "O, Clara!" and laid her head upon the bosom of her friend, and sobbed aloud.

Clara let her weep for some time, without attempting to comfort her, and then she kissed the now burning cheek of the distressed girl, and putting her hand upon her forehead, said, soothingly: "We will hope for the best, Amy, dear."

"But, O, Clara! to think of the dreadful sight!—reeling through the streets in a state of intoxication, with oaths upon his lips!" And her slight frame shivered as she spoke. "What would his poor mother say? O, George!" said she, clasping her hands, "I had rather have heard thou wast dead!"

"Not so, not so, Amy. We will hope. He cannot be altogether wicked,—wholly changed from what he once was. Henry, with the assistance of our heavenly Father, may yet bring him back to virtue."

"God grant it may, indeed, be so!" said Amy, earnestly.

CHAPTER XIII.

SCENE IN A GAMBLING HOUSE.

"T WAS night in the city, and a party of gay and dissipated young men entered one of the notorious drinking and gambling saloons in C. Street.

"Come, sit down, George, and let's have a game," said one, well known in the city as a notorious swindler. The person addressed replied, "No, I cannot play to-night."

"Oh, pshaw! don't say that; sit down, sit down my good fellow. Waiter," said he, turning round, "fetch us two glasses and a bottle of wine."

"But I can't play, Bill, indeed," said the young man, at the same time, however, casting his eyes wistfully upon the table, and on the wine which the waiter had just brought.

"But why, what is the reason you can't play? I thought you was always ready."

"And faith, so I am," said he, "when I can get anything to play with. But what can be done, when you have not a cent of money in your pocket?"

"What, all gone! you don't say, George. Never mind, I'm flush; I'll lend you some—just enough to begin with."

George seemed still irresolute, but advanced toward the table, where his companion already seated.

"Come, sit down," said he, at the same time pulling him into a chair, and pushing towards him a glass of the tempting liquor. George seized the glass, and swallowed the contents at once.

"Now we will begin," said Bill, taking the cards.

"Yes, on borrowed capital."

The two men were very intent upon the game, and heeded not the entrance of a gentleman dressed in black, who came and took a seat just in front of them, and seemed to observe them very narrowly.

The obsequious waiter stepped up to him, and asked if he wished for anything. "Nothing at present," was the reply, and he was left alone.

He sat for a long time observing, but unobserved by the two gamblers. His countenance was very sad, and occasionally he pressed his hand to his head.

Notwithstanding the two gamblers

so intent upon their game, the wine passed freely; though the stranger noticed that George drank much oftener and deeper than the other, for the latter only touched his lips to the glass, while the former drained it at every draught.

Still the game continued, and it was plainly to be seen that George was the loser. At last, with an oath, he threw down the cards in despair.

"You have bad luck, to-night, George; however, your turn will come. Hadn't you better try again."

"No, confound it! I'll not play another card." At the same time, he emptied the entire contents of the bottle into the glass, and drained it to the dregs.

"I've made a bad night's work of it, that's a fact," said he, pressing his hand to his burning forehead. "I'm in debt to you now, for a pretty amount; when do you suppose you will get your money? I've not a cent in the world."

"Can't you borrow?"

"No, indeed, I can't."

"Well," said the other, coolly, "I don't think I shall wait a great while."

"I didn't ask you to lend me your money; it was your own offering."

"I shall expect to get my pay, nevertheless."

George attempted to rise from the table, but the other laid his hand upon his arm.

"No, my man, you don't go from here, till you either pay me, or give me some security."

"Have n't I told you I had n't a cent in the world? As for security, I'll give you my word, if you think that will do!" said he, jeeringly.

"I'll take it for just what it is worth, nothing at all. But there is a watch in your vest, which will do, and, with your permission, I'll take that, and then you may go where you please."

"You will take it, will you?" said George, and his eyes flashed as he spoke. "But I think you will not; and which do you suppose thinks right?"

"Just as you please," said the other, coolly, "but you don't stir from here, till I have the money or the watch."

Now the watch was a very valuable one, and had been given to George Bryant by his father, as a freedom present, and, amid all his degradation, he had still kept it, although he had often come very near parting with it, but something had always withheld him.

Now he was enraged with his bad luck, heated with wine, and vexed, too, at the coolness and impudence of his companion, and rising hastily from his seat, with threatening words upon his lips, would have left the place; but his companion also rose, and taking him by the collar, a short scuffle ensued, which, however, attracted little notice here, where such scenes were not at all uncommon. It was but a moment, — a hand was laid upon the arm of each of the young men, and a low, earnest voice broke strangely in upon their furious words. They both stopped and gazed upon the intruder, and the eyes of each flashed. It was the stranger in black, who had entered so silently, and observed them so narrowly.

“How dare you?” was upon the lips of each of the incensed young men; but they saw, by the stranger’s calm, steady mien, that he feared them not.

“George, George Bryant,” said he, in a sad tone, “it grieves me to the heart to see you here.”

“I don’t know why you should interest yourself in my whereabouts. It is an interest, let me tell you, for which you will receive no thanks.”

"Do you not know me, George? Then must I have altered more than yourself."

The tone of his voice seemed familiar to the young man; but his senses were blunted by the influence of the wine which he had drank; yet still, as he looked again into the open, noble countenance, and saw the dark, sad eyes fixed upon his own, the burning blush of shame mantled upon his cheek, and he turned his head silently away.

"I see you know me, George, but you thought not of meeting me here. I wish to speak with you; will you not go home with me?"

"Home!" said he, as if speaking to himself. "Where is your home?"

"My home, at present, is in the city. Will you not go with me?"

"Oh, yes, if it is here; but I thought if it was *there*, where it used to be, I could not go."

"I think I shall have something to say to that bargain," broke in his gambling companion. "I have claims upon his precious company, stronger than yours, sir stranger."

"Your claims shall be settled; what are they?"

The man mentioned the amount of the

debt, and Henry Gordon, for the reader, doubtless, has surmised it was he, took the money from his purse, gave it him, and then, taking the arm of George within his own, departed.

“Well, my lad,” soliloquized the deserted gambler, “you’ve got out of a bad scrape very well this time, thanks to your unknown friend, though a precious lecture you’ll have to take, when you get to that home, or I am mistaken. I’m rather sorry, too, for I had set my heart upon that watch; it is a splendid one; I had rather had it than the money, but I must wait for another opportunity. Waiter, fetch me some more wine; I hardly got my share of the first.”

CHAPTER XIV.


THE MINISTER'S STUDY.

WE will follow George Bryant and Henry Gordon to the home and the study of the latter. There were the two who had played together in childhood, and had been almost as brothers. How different! The one whom the world would have marked out as the most promising,—he with the kind, generous heart, the forgiving temper, the mild disposition,—sat there, with the mark of the inebriate upon his brow, the blush of conscious shame upon his cheek, silent and abashed! While he,—the son of a drunkard, schooled in poverty, the quick, passionate, and sometimes resentful boy,—was now, the firm, noble man; the friend of truth, the advocate of temperance, and the minister of God. One had conquered himself, and the other had yielded thoughtlessly to the evil around him, and gone further and further in the downward path, and this was the result.

Henry had always, even as a boy, possessed considerable influence over George.

It was the influence that a strong, determined mind, always possesses over a weaker and vacillating one. And this influence was not yet wholly lost. He had but to work upon his feelings and his better nature. He spoke to him of his parents; told him how they sorrowed for him, and how their hopes of his being to them a comfort in their declining years were blighted. He pictured to him his home, and each familiar spot,—the sad, tearful face of his mother, the careworn countenance of his father; and the young man covered his face and wept. He told him, too, of Amy; how her young heart had mourned for him, and that the smile came but seldom to her lips, and her glad, joyous laugh was ever silent. All this he told him, and much more. And then, he pictured to him what he might have been,—the comfort of his parents, the benefactor of mankind. He told him of a happy, quiet home, and of the sweet, gentle one, that would have made that home a dear and blessed spot. The young man heard it all, and the tears streamed down his cheeks, and he wept as he had not wept for years.

“Do you wish to madden me, Henry, or why do you tell me of all this?”



"I tell you this, George, that you may your error, and know that it is not your alone whom you have injured, and still injuring by your faults. It is not too late to turn back; there are many strong voices calling you to duty and virtue."

"It is very easy for you to talk of reform, but, let me tell you, it needs a stronger will than I possess, to turn back now. A thousand demons are pressing me forward, their horrid din drowns the low, faint voice of duty and virtue."

"It is because you do not pause to listen. Stop but for a moment in your mad career, and let the horrid din pass by, and then you will hear the strong and earnest voices clearly and distinctly."

"It is of no use; it is too late! Years of dissipation have passed over me since we met; and do you not see that I have changed?"

"Yes, George, you have changed! Time ever works sad changes on its votaries; but virtue has a renovating power. It is not too late! It is never too late to do good. Think of your grey-haired father; think of your mother who watched you and cared for you. Is it too late to go and ask their forgiveness?"

Or would you have them go down to their grave in sorrow,—their last moments embittered by your misconduct and ingratitude?"

The deep, fervent eloquence of Henry was not without its effect on the mind of George. Since he left his father's house, there had been no one to encourage him to good. He had fallen in, on his arrival at the city, with some of his college associates, and had led, since that time, a vicious and dissipated life. He had procured employment, as clerk, in a mercantile establishment, for he was a good penman; but his money was expended as fast as it was earned, and nights of dissipation rendering him unfit for his daily labor, his employer was at length obliged to turn him away.

There were hundreds just like him in the city, and how they lived, and how they procured their money they squandered so lavishly away, it was difficult to tell. If ever his thoughts turned to his home, his parents, and the gentle Amy, they were so full of bitterness and remorse, that he drowned them, as soon as possible, in the intoxicating draught.

The meeting with Henry had quite over-

come him. It had called up feelings he knew not he possessed, and ere their first interview was ended, he had promised to forsake his old haunts and companions, and stay with Henry for at least a few days.

Henry had written to Clara, informing her of his success, thus far. He now penned a short note, knowing that she would be anxious to hear.

“Thursday.

“DEAR CLARA :

“George sits with me in my room, reading Amy's letters, which she has written to me since my removal to the city. He thinks me busy with my books, and, therefore, heeds not my presence ; but I steal a glance at him, occasionally, and I can see the tears are in his eyes, and that he is very much affected. O, Clara ! there is much room for hope ; but we must not expect too much ; reformation, to be complete, cannot be made sure in a moment. He has been more contented here than I expected, but he is sometimes uneasy, and walks the floor as if impatient. I must try and think of some way to employ his mind and take up his time. I will write to you again soon ; I must close now, for I see he has put aside

the letters, and is gazing abstractedly from the window."

All this intelligence was gladly received by Clara, and by her conveyed to Amy, but they yet withheld it from Mr. and Mrs. Bryant, till they should hear further from Henry. The next day, came another letter from Henry, which ran thus :

" Friday.

" DEAR CLARA :

" Very happy am I to inform you, that I have procured a situation for George, which I think will answer my purpose very well. There is a Mr. Hunt, a very zealous member of my church, and a truly good man, to whom I communicated George's history, as also the interest I took in his welfare. I asked his advice concerning what it was best to do. He was instantly interested, as he always is in every good work, and said that he was in want of a clerk, and that he would employ him, and he might board in his family, if he liked, and he would do all he could to make his situation pleasant. I went home, and mentioned the subject to George, who seemed very much pleased, but said he would prefer boarding with me, if I

should not be ashamed of him. Of course, I assured him to the contrary, and so it is all settled, and he enters upon his duties Monday morning.

"I spoke to him about coming home, but he said he could not come, at present. When he left his parents, he determined he would never return till he was worthy to be called their son, and he still adheres to the resolution.

"I think, Clara, that you may venture to impart the glad tidings to Mr. and Mrs. Bryant, as it seems really wrong to keep from them any longer that which causes us so much pleasure, and which I know will so gladden their hearts.

"I may ride out to Glendale next week, but I suppose George will not consent to accompany me. I wish very much to see you all, and see what change this good news has wrought upon you. May God's blessing rest upon the good work thus begun."

CHAPTER XV.

PARLOR SCENES.

CLARA took all the letters in her hand, and proceeded to the parlor where Mr. Bryant sat reading, and Mrs. Bryant sewing by the window. She opened the door quickly, and the thought of the glad news of which she was the messenger, gave a joyous expression to her beautiful countenance.

"Why, Clara," said Mr. Bryant, looking up from his book, "you look very much pleased; are those letters connected with your pleasure? If so, do let us have a peep into them. Henry's handwriting, I see!"

"Yes, dear father, I have joyful news contained in these letters, and I brought them here expressly for your perusal," and she handed him the letters, in the order in which they were written.

Mr. Bryant read them, one by one, and handed them to his wife. As he finished the last, he drew a long breath, and hid his face in his hands; but when he looked up, there was a glad, happy, grateful expression on his pale and careworn features.

It was with difficulty the mother could finish the last letter, her eyes were so full of joyful tears. She put her arms round the neck of the loving girl beside her, and said, "You will thank Henry for us; the fondest blessings of our grateful hearts be round his path forever. He is worthy of you, my child. But, George, my poor George! May our God give him strength to persevere in the right! Would that I could see him; but I suppose he has altered so much, I should not know him." And she took up the last letter and read it again.

"Come here, Clara, my child," said Mr. Bryant, kindly.

She obeyed, and seated herself on a low seat beside him. He bent over, and whispered a few words in her ear, which brought the bright blush over cheek, neck, and brow, and she hid her burning face in her hands. Mr. Bryant smiled at the effect his simple words had produced; but in a moment, the face was raised confidently to his, and each seemed to understand the joy of the other.

Need we pause longer to describe the pleasure of the parents? Need we tell of the hopes and fears which reigned by turns in their hearts? Oh! it would be such joy to see

again their child, their first, their only son, return to them virtuous and dutiful.

Clara left the parents together, and putting on her bonnet, went out to carry the last joyful intelligence to Mrs. Gordon, who had heard, from Amy, the progress of affairs thus far. As she entered the door, the first question was, "Have you heard from Henry?" But they need not have asked; it was enough to look on her joyous face, to know she brought glad news.

In a few days Henry himself came to confirm the hopeful tidings. George had so far done very well; he attended to his business with diligence and apparent pleasure, and his evenings were passed with Henry, in reading or profitable conversation. Oh! they had strong hopes of his reformation.

Henry, Clara and Amy were sitting together in the parlor of Mr. Bryant, when Amy suddenly looked up archly, and with something of her natural vivacity, said:

"I really forgot, Henry, that we had left mother entirely alone. You seem so well contented here, it would be a pity to send you home to keep her company; so I suppose I shall even have to go myself. Besides, I think you can get along very well without me here; what do you think, Henry?"

"Spoken just like yourself, Amy, and I am glad to hear it, even though it is at my own expense. I wish you a pleasant walk home."

"Indeed, you seem to be so willing to have me go, I have a great mind to stay."

"I think you had better stay, Amy," said Clara: "Henry will not like to go home alone."

"Indeed, your wishes seem to be widely different; but, however, I think I shall go. I leave you my best respects, and hope you will not differ so widely on other subjects;" and, with a light laugh, she closed the door and departed.

"Amy is really quite like herself to-day," said Henry.

"She is, indeed. This joyful news has made us all livelier; it seems as if a shadow had passed from our hearts; let us hope it may never again gather there."

The voices of the speakers grew very low as they proceeded in their conversation, so low, that it was, as Amy had once said, impossible to hear what was said, or nothing more than detached sentences. Possibly Henry was urging some particular duty, for the word was often spoken. At last, Clara spoke as if deciding the point, for a woman

will always have the last word. "When his reformation is complete, and he is again to his parents what he once was, I shall consider my duty here fulfilled, and shall be ready, considering you so very much wish it, to enter upon a new and untried sphere."

The latter words were accompanied by a blush and a smile; and this was all that we could gather of the conversation. The reader is welcome to put the same construction upon it that we did.

We expect that Henry went home, fully resolved to do all he could to establish George firmly in his good principles, and if the reader should accuse him of acting from selfish motives, let he or she look to it, and fall not into the same error.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONFIDENCE NOT LOST.

AGAIN we will look in upon Henry Gordon and George Bryant. They have laid aside their employment for the evening, and are having a social chat, ere they retire for the night.

"I had a letter from Clara to day, and she says, can you not persuade George to come home? His parents do so wish to see him, it seems almost unkind in him to stay away."

"Does she say this?" said George.

"She does. Why, you did not doubt your parents' readiness to receive you? It is now nearly six months you have been with Mr. Hunt, and you have done better than even I expected. Do you not think yourself 'worthy to be called their son?'"

"I should hardly dare to say that I did. Think how long I was in the haunts of vice, and then how short a time, comparatively, since I left my evil ways! When I think of all this, it seems as if I had hardly done

enough to prove myself worthy a seat in my father's house."

"Remember the prodigal son, George. Did he not arise from the very midst of his degradation, and go to his father? 'and while he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him.' Even so, George, would your father meet you."

"I do not doubt it, Henry; I will go to them; I will, indeed, be to them a son."

"I am glad to hear you say this, and to-morrow we will go together. Mr. Hunt will spare you, I think, for one day."

The next day saw George at his father's. The prodigal had returned. Need we say that he was joyfully received? It would take an abler pen than ours, to describe the meeting.

And how did George and Amy meet? Why, how should they? Certainly as friends, as brother and sister, if you please. To be sure, Amy blushed a little, but George felt a great deal more confused; and if he did not call her his own little Amy, it was because he had a deep sense of his own unworthiness, and could not look upon the pure, open brow of the innocent girl, and

say, this is my own. It would have seemed, so he thought, coming from his lips, like profanation.

Whenever he addressed her, his voice was very sad, though kind; but she spoke to him cheerfully as ever, and the smile played upon her features, and she tried to make him feel comfortably and pleasantly.

"Shall we not walk out?" said Henry. "It is really too pleasant to stay in the house. Come, Clara, get your bonnet; and, George, you must wait upon Amy."

"You see," said Amy, "they monopolize each other the same as ever."

Henry and Clara led the way to the cottage, and George and Amy followed. But he did not offer her his arm, and, for an instant, there was a faint feeling at her heart, as she stepped lightly to his side; but it passed quickly away, and she turned to him and said—

"Henry has made a great many alterations in the cottage; quite improved it, I think you will say, when you see it."

"His path is everywhere marked by good deeds," said George, in a tone of sadness.

They walked for awhile in silence, till

they came in full view of the house, when George spoke.

"He has, indeed, improved it. It is a beautiful, romantic looking spot, truly. And it looks so natural, too, one cannot regret the improvement, as is sometimes the case, when all we once loved in a familiar place is sacrificed."

"I am glad you like it," said she, pleased to see that he spoke with such animation. "It is a dear, pleasant spot to me."

"It is pleasant to me, also, as is everything around; indeed, I thought not Glendale would seem so pleasant to me; but it is the same, though I look upon it with far different feelings than ever before."

Again there was a long pause in the conversation.

Henry and Clara stopped to gather some flowers in the cottage garden, but George took the hand of Amy, and drawing it within his arm, proceeded. Their steps turned, instinctively, to the old worn path which led down to the water, and they seated themselves upon the accustomed seat, but George still retained the slight hand in his.

"Do you remember, Amy, the last time we sat here together?"

"Very distinctly," replied she.

"Do you remember the promise here given?"

"I do."

"And how was it kept? It was made only to be broken. Your faith, your confidence, must be wholly destroyed. Is it not so?" said he, looking earnestly in her face.

"No, George, it is not," said she, solemnly. "I know you forgot your promise then, but still, should you utter the same promise now, I should trust you as implicitly, ay, more so, than I did then, for I hardly dared trust it then; I should now."

"But why should you put more confidence in me now?"

"Because you have been tried, and I see that you are really determined to persevere."

"But I am weak, Amy; very weak."

"To him who prayeth for strength, strength will be given," said she, solemnly.

"I know it, and I have prayed deeply and fervently."

"I believe you, George," said she, raising her eyes trustingly to his; "and you will still pray, and still find strength."

"You encourage me very much. I had feared that your confidence in me was

wholly destroyed. I had feared that I had estranged all hearts that loved me."

"Not so, George."

"Bless you for the words, Amy. Confidence and love,—say, are they both restored?"

Amy was silent, and the deep blush mantled over cheek and brow. George bent his head to hers, and said, in a low voice: "I ask no promise from you, Amy; wait till I have proved to you that I am more worthy of you. It would seem like profanation for me to ask any word or promise from you now. But you will think of me kindly; you will encourage me by your smiles; you will speak to me and trust me as you have ever done? And, perhaps, the time may yet come, when I may call you again,—as I used to call you in your childish days,—my own Amy. May I hope this?"

The slight hand he held returned his pressure, and that was enough; George Bryant was satisfied.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONVERSATION ON REFORM.

HENRY and Clara were married; and was an event which had been long expected by the people of Glendale, even from the time when Mrs. Warren announced their engagement, it excited no wonder, and elicited few remarks. Henry took his bride to her city home, where she was beloved by her goodness and amiability.

George still continued with Mr. Hunt. He was much pleased with him, and in time he became his partner in the business.

Those years were years of trial to him. He was not lightly won from the shackles of vice by which he was bound. It was no small thing to break up old habits, and to withstand the cravings of a diseased nature, and the solicitations of his old associates, with whom he sometimes met. He was comforted by the kind voice of affection, but constant watchfulness was needed, and was required in action, and he found that the longer he resisted temptation, the easier he found that resistance. At length, after many and strong efforts,

and a long season of trial, he stood before the world, freed from the shackles of vice—a reformed man.

Mrs. Warren and her daughter were sitting at their window, as usual, one morning, when a horse and chaise stopped at the cottage of Mrs. Gordon.

"I must say that George Bryant is really quite a constant visitor at Mrs. Gordon's," said Mrs. Warren.

"Why, mother, Amy is to be married soon, I expect."

"Married! and to George Bryant, too! Well, I ~~knew~~ that they were always together, but hardly thought they would ever marry each other."

"And why not, mamma?" said Miss Julia.

"Why, things have gone on in this way so long, I began to think it was nothing, after all; and then, he is ten years older than she."

"O no, mother; not more than nine at the most, and I don't think that is much; and then, his father is very rich."

"I know that; but only think what his character has been! for my part, I should not wish a daughter of mine to marry him."

Miss Julia looked as though she could see no possible objection, and much doubted her

mother's assertion. "But, mother, he has reformed; for three years he has been quite steady, and they say has done a great deal towards reforming others."

"Yes, this is all very fine to talk about, but I would n't trust him. When are they to be married?"

"Very soon, I think; for when I went into Mrs. Gordon's last, they seemed to have a great deal of work on hand."

"I suppose they will set out in great style. It is strange how some folks do get along in the world. I have seen the time when Miss Amy Gordon had scarcely a gown to her back, and when her mother could hardly get enough to eat; and now she will be as fine a lady as anybody. Mr. Bryant's folks always took a great fancy to the family, and perhaps Amy thinks it is nothing more than her duty to marry George, if he asks her, seeing they have always been so good to her."

"I think inclination was consulted as much as duty," remarked Julia.

At this moment, Mrs. Warren espied Mrs. Waitt passing by, and calling to her to come in, she hastened to open the door, and as soon as she was seated, said :

"Have you heard that Amy Gordon is going to be married?"

"Oh, yes, I knew it some time ago. I was just going to assist them in making preparations."

"Really, I might have thought you would have known all about it. I suppose you will be at the wedding."

"I have an invitation."

"Do they intend living in the city?"

"They do, for the present."

"But should you not think, Mrs. Waitt, there might be some danger of his returning to his bad habits?"

"To be sure, Mrs. Warren, one cannot look into futurity; but I hardly think it probable that George Bryant will again wander from the right path. I think his reformation has been deep and thorough, and it has certainly stood a long trial."

"Yes, yes, I know it; but still—"

"But still what, Mrs. Warren? We are none of us infallible; but ought we, for that, to distrust every one, and put no faith in mankind? Many are driven back to their old habits of vice, through distrust and jealousy, that might have been saved by kindness and confidence."

"But I should hardly dare trust my happiness to such dangerous keeping."

"We look upon the subject very differently. I know there are some in whose reformation I should put but little trust. But George Bryant is not one of those; there is no deceit in his character; nothing really vicious in his heart; he grew dissipated more from the force of circumstances than any wicked propensities. He was one easily influenced, and of a yielding disposition. His marriage with Amy, who possesses a great influence over him, will greatly strengthen his reformation, and I can see nothing at all dangerous to the happiness of either in their marriage. His dereliction from duty has been to him a good lesson; his strivings to free himself from his bad habits, have given strength to his character, and rendered him more watchful to guard against the temptations around him."

"Well, it may be as you say; but still I should think that Mrs. Gordon would think too much of the sorrows and trials of her own wedded life, to give her daughter to one who had ever trodden in the same path."

"Mr. Gordon was a very different person from George Bryant. He possessed a strong, passionate temper, that had never been con-

trolled in childhood; selfishness was a predominant trait in his character, and when he fell, it was almost irretrievably. But yet, even he was not quite so debased and fallen as he might have been. The pure and gentle spirit of his wife had some influence over him. Had he been a single man, with no one to have cared for him, his hand would not have stayed at robbery or murder; or, had his wife been less kind or forgiving to him in his wanderings, it would have roused his passions, and he would have spurned her advice, and heeded not her remonstrances; but, as it was, her gentle, silent influence saved him from many a wicked deed; and when at last sickness came, and death stared him in the face, frightful as it ever is to the wicked, then Mrs. Gordon reaped the reward of all her sufferings and trials."

"A great reward, I should think!" interrupted Mrs. Warren, sneeringly, "to be obliged to mortgage her house to fetch home a drunken husband. I guess, if he had gone and left me for years, as he had her, I would not have troubled myself further about him."

"You would not have left him to die in misery and poverty? Do you not call it a reward to bring an erring husband to virtue?"

Was it a small thing to save a single soul from a moral death? Believe me, Mrs. Gordon considers herself amply repaid for her years of suffering and trial; and though, to be sure, her husband did not live long, to test the strength of his reformation, yet she had the assurance that his repentance was sincere. His stubborn temper had yielded, and during his last sickness, he was more kind and affectionate to her than he had ever been even in their first wedded life; and it was no small thing to her, that she, with God's blessing on her endeavors, had been able, at last to rescue him from sin and vice, and render his last days truly his best days. But I have talked longer than I intended, and must really be going along, or I shall be of but little assistance in the mighty work of getting ready to be married. So I wish you a good morning."

"Well," said Mrs. Warren, as Mrs. Wait closed the door, "we have had quite a sermon, and, Julia, I hope you feel very much edified."

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCLUSION.


AND now we have come to our last chapter; and we ought, to follow the custom of the present day, after we have seen our heroes and heroines safely married, leave them. But thinking that, perhaps, some may be as anxious as Mrs. Warren to know whether George Bryant continued firm in his reformation, we will vouchsafe a few lines more.

You have but to go to the city, and any one can tell you of George Bryant. His name stands the first in every good work. His voice is always raised for the defence of the erring and the sinful. His hand is ever ready to help the wanderer, and lead him up from the haunts of vice, and put him in the road to virtue. And kindly and unostentatiously is all this done; and if his name is on every lip, and his good deeds the theme of every tongue, it is because the light of a good life shines far, and hearts full of gratitude will point out their benefactor.

Three or four years have passed, and we will look in upon George Bryant and his family. In a neat, pleasant street of the city, stand two houses, precisely alike; and, need we say, that the occupants are Henry Gordon, and George Bryant, and their respective families. On the evening in question, they were all seated in the parlor of the latter. Mr. and Mrs. Bryant the elder, and Mrs. Gordon, were also there.

And now, we suppose we must describe the appearance of the different characters. Had they grown older? Oh, yes! three or four years; all of them. But they were not much changed, after all. The old folks, scarcely at all. Perhaps a few more grey hairs; perhaps a few more lines in the face; but we should have known them, certainly.

Henry Gordon looks pale and thin. Poor man! his health is not good. Injured, perhaps, by too much study. But Clara is very watchful of him, and has strictly forbidden his studying after nine o'clock at night. Every book must then be closed, and every pen and every sheet of paper put away. And then, his frolicksome children will sometimes intrude into his study, and he will be obliged to leave books, studies, and all thereto



pertaining, for a game of romps with the little urchins; so, between the watchfulness of his wife and the playfulness of his children, it is thought his health is really improving.

George Bryant and his own little Amy, as he now calls her, have grown older with the rest; but time has touched them lightly. The brow of Amy is just as smooth, and the light, sunny hair curls just as pretty around it. The eyes are just as witching, and the lips just as ready to smile, as in her girlhood. She is quite young, even now, and her slight figure, as she bends over her husband's chair, looks almost like a child's.

"What were you going to say, Amy, just as Henry and Clara came in?"

"Oh! I was going to tell you, George, about a poor woman who came here to-day. She looked very wretched, and had a little girl with her,—a pretty child, but so scantily clad that she shivered as she came in. She said she was very poor, and had three children; this was the youngest; and her husband would drink, she said, sometimes, and then he was very cross to her. And she wished I would speak to you and ask you to come and see her husband, for he is sick

now. And said she, 'if Mr. Bryant should come and see him, perhaps he could persuade him to do better. If he could only give him some employment, and just see to him, and encourage him a little once in a while, it might do him a sight of good.' I told the woman I would mention it to you, and she seemed very thankful; 'for,' said she, 'we are very poor, and nobody seems to care for us, and John gets all discouraged, and then he takes to drinking, to drown his sorrow; and you know, marm, that only makes it worse; and one of my neighbors told me of Mr. Bryant, and how good he was to the poor, and I thought I would come and see him.'"

"But didn't she ask for any clothes, or food?"

"She said she did not like to beg, but she seemed very thankful for a basket of victuals and some clothes I gave her to carry home."

"Where did she say she lived?"

"In C — street."

"I will go to-night, and see what can be done to assist her."

"I will accompany you," said Henry, rising.

No effort was made by either Clara or

Amy to detain them, for they knew they were on an errand of mercy.

The two gentlemen put on their overcoats and departed ; but we will not follow them on their mission of charity, for this was but one incident among many which were often occurring. Suffice it to say, that another soul was rescued from vice, and a family once poor and miserable, were made happy and comfortable.

“Great is the strength of an individual soul, true to its high trust.”

The reader must not imagine that Glendale was deserted. Every summer was spent amid its beauties. The humble cottage was dear to them as ever, and glad childish voices again rang through the orchards, and little feet trod the path down to the water, and small hands plucked the wild flowers that blossomed beneath the old tree.

Every summer, Mrs. Warren watched from her window, to see the carriage come ; a heavy load, I can assure you,—parents, children, and grand-children. A wonder was it to her, how they were all packed in. Very comfortable riding, she should think. She would as soon have walked. And then, such a noise as those children did make !

surely, city children were the noisiest things she ever saw, and Amy herself was not much better; she really thought, getting married would have sobered her a little, but she didn't see as anything would make her sedate and matronly, like other folks.

But yet, after all her finding fault, she would have been lonely without them, and she watched eagerly for their arrival, and learned, at length, to love the little frolickers, who sometimes intruded into her domains; but yet, she never chid them, and after a while, she was heard to say: "That for all the two families were so rich, and thought so much of, they were just like other folks, and she liked them very well; much better than she thought she should. And Amy was very neighborly, and not at all proud."

Truly, Mrs. Warren's sometimes discordant soul was slowly coming into harmony.



SEP 20 1998

.....

.....

.....

